

CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS
ABOUT THE NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN KARS

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ABSTRACT

CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN KARS

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This cross sectional survey study examined the perceptions of classroom teachers in urban regions of Kars Province including its towns and teacher educators in Kafkas University about the new elementary school curriculum in Kars Province. It also revealed their perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses of the elementary school curriculum, students' educational needs from the window of local characteristics of Kars, and classroom teachers' needs with regard to the new elementary school curriculum. The data were collected from classroom teachers based on the responses they gave on a survey questionnaire and from interview data with teacher educators that was collected through a semi-structured interview form. Data gathered were analyzed utilizing content analysis method.

The major findings of the study revealed the following about that the new elementary school curriculum: (1) active student understanding and common skills were mentioned; (2) its appropriateness to students' level; (3) relevancy to students' everyday life; (4) its comprehensiveness; and (5) variety that were somehow

achieved. On the other hand, the findings also showed that there were problems with regard to the new elementary school curriculum: (1) lack of parental involvement to educational process in Kars; (2) over crowding of classrooms; (3) insufficient materials in schools; (4) insufficient in meeting local characteristics and conditions of Kars.

Keywords: The new elementary school curriculum, classroom teachers, teacher educators, students and classroom teachers' needs.

ÖZ

KARS İL'İNDEKİ SINIF ÖĞRETMENLERİ VE ÖĞRETMEN YETİŞTİRİCİLERİNİN YENİ İLKÖĞRETİM PROGRAMI HAKKINDAKİ ALGILARI

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Bu kesitsel tarama araştırmasında, Kars İl'i merkez ve ilçelerinin kentsel bölgelerindeki sınıf öğretmenleri ile Kafkas Üniversitesi'ndeki öğretmen yetiştiricilerinin yeni ilköğretim programı hakkında algıları araştırılmıştır. Araştırmada ayrıca ilköğretim programının güçlü ve zayıf yönleri, Kars'ın yerel özellikleri çerçevesinde öğrencilerin eğitimsel ihtiyaçları, sınıf öğretmenlerinin ilköğretimi programına yönelik ihtiyaçları ile ilgili algıları ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Araştırma verileri, sınıf öğretmenlerinin tarama anketine verdikleri cevaplar ile öğretmen yetiştiricilerinden yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile elde edilen verilerden oluşmaktadır. Elde edinilen tüm veriler içerik analizi yöntemiyle değerlendirilmiştir.

Araştırma temel bulguları: (1) aktif öğrenci anlayışı ve yeni ilköğretim programında bahsedilen temel beceriler; (2) öğrencilerin seviyesine uygunluk; (3) öğrencilerin günlük hayatına uygunluk; (4) kapsamlılık; (5) çeşitlilik gibi konular hakkında

başarıya bir şekilde ulaşıldığını göstermiştir. Diğer bir taraftan, araştırma bulguları: (1) Kars İl'indeki ailelerin eğitim sürecine katılımları; (2) kalabalık sınıflar; (3) okullardaki yetersiz kaynaklar; (4) Kars İl'inin yerel özellikleri ve koşullarına uygunluk konularında sorunlar yaşanmakta olduğunu göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeni ilköğretim programı, sınıf öğretmenleri, öğretmen yetiştiricileri, öğrencilerin ve sınıf öğretmenlerinin ihtiyaçları.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EARGED: Educational Research and Development Directorate (Eđitim Arařtırma ve Geliřtirme Daire Bařkanlıđı)

ERG: Educational Reform Initiative (Eđitimde Reform Giriřimi)

HEC: Higher Education Council (Yüksek Öđretim Kurulu)

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies

IQ: Intelligence Quotient

MONE: Ministry of National Education (Milli Eđitim Bakanlıđı)

PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment

PIRLS: Progress in Reading Literacy Study

SBS: Placement Test

TIMMS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

TTKB: Turkish Board of Education (Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Bařkanlıđı)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter; the background, the purpose and the significance of the study are covered. And the chapter ends with the definition of the terms.

1.1. Background of the Study

Since the establishment of the Turkish Republic, one of the main policies of the state has been spreading elementary schools all over the country, because elementary education is an important part of human life. As Akyüz (2009) said:

Elementary education is a fundamental stone of education system, and during that process individuals in the society have chance to learn basic knowledge and skills which help them to live a consistent life with the society. (p.349)

Elementary education includes education of children aged between 6 and 14 years since 1997 – 1998 academic year [It has a population of 10.709.920 and the net schooling rate is 96.49% all over the country in 2009 according to Ministry of National Education (MONE, 2009)]. Regardless of gender, it is compulsory for all citizens and is free of charge at state elementary schools. To have every Turkish child acquire the basic knowledge, skills, behaviors and habits necessary to be a good citizen, to educate them appropriate in the national moral sense, and to prepare every Turkish child to upper education by means of developing them in their interests, abilities and talents are the general aims of Turkish National Education (Eurydice, 2009a).

Along with spreading elementary schools all over the country in early years of the Turkish Republic, there have been curriculum practices between 1924 and 1930. Main philosophy of these practices is to make the new generations to internalize Republic Regime and its benefits, but in thirties and fifties introducing country to world and developed countries has become the new main philosophy of the curriculum (Yüksel, 2003). There have always been efforts to change the elementary school curriculum according to the needs of the society. For instance, in 1953 one of decisions of Fifth National Education Convention is to revise elementary school curriculum and to make it appropriate with its own goals and principles (MONE, 1953).

Seventh National Education Convention realized in 1962 has also given importance to the topic above. Results of this convention about elementary school curriculum are as follows; revising curriculum according to the needs and circumstances, preparing textbooks appropriate to the new developed curriculum, making teacher education programs appropriate to it, piloting the new curriculum in various regions after commission study, revising it again according to piloting results and applying the new curriculum all over the state (MONE, 1962). There has been an increase in the eighties about curriculum development practices and a new curriculum development model is constituted in 1982. Some partial struggles are also realized until 2004. And lastly, in 2004 the new elementary school curriculum is developed. The new elementary school curriculum is firstly piloted in 120 elementary schools in nine provinces (Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Bolu, Diyarbakır, Samsun, Hatay, Kocaeli, and Van) in 2004 – 2005 academic year and has been in use nationwide since 2005 – 2006 academic year. To summarize, until this major change in elementary school curriculum in 2005, there have been radical changes in elementary school curriculum since the establishment of Turkish Republic; these are realized in 1924, 1926, 1936, 1948 and 1968, and there have been subjects based changes until 2004.

Curriculum change is an inevitable process. Curriculum is a product of the society and reflects it; and shaping the next generations is also realized through curriculum.

As Gözütok (2003) says that curriculum is one of the three important components of the education system beside the teacher and student.

There are many reasons behind the change in elementary school curriculum. Changes in knowledge society, life long learning understanding, results of PISA, TIMMS, PIRLS, etc. are affective in this curriculum development process (Turkish Board of Education [TTKB], 2005a) and curricular reforms realized in other countries (Far East, North America and European Union) and the norms, European Union's targets and educational conceptions also influence the curriculum development approaches (Akınoğlu, 2008). Besides, the basic objectives of the curriculum reform are (TTKB, 2005a as cited in Akşit, 2007):

1. To reduce the amount of content and number of concepts,
2. To arrange the units thematically,
3. To develop nine core competencies across the curriculum,
4. To move from teacher centered didactic model to a student centered constructivist model,
5. To incorporate information and communication technologies (ICT) into instruction,
6. To monitor student progress through formative assessment,
7. To move away from traditional assessment of recall, and to introduce authentic assessment,
8. To enhance citizenship education,
9. To introduce foreign language courses for elementary school
10. To broaden the scope of religious education
11. To establish a system of representation, and engage students in community work. (pp.133-134)

The new elementary school curriculum is also affected from the contemporary approaches in education and learning; it has been based on constructivist learning theory, multiple intelligence theory, student-centered, active learning and thematic approaches to construct organization. According to Miller (2000), the change in understanding of education with constructivist learning theory is aimed to:

Allow students to develop and construct their own understanding of the material based upon their own knowledge and beliefs and experiences in concert with new knowledge presented in the classroom. (p.92)

Along with the reasons and basic objectives of establishing a new elementary school curriculum, curriculum is prepared at the national level by the TTKB in Turkey, and courses are determined according to grades. They are categorized as follows (Eurydice, 2009b):

1. Compulsory courses including Turkish, mathematics, science and technology, social sciences, life sciences, foreign language, religion culture and moral knowledge, visual arts, music, physical education and traffic safety.
2. Elective courses such as computer education, drama, speech and writing, a second foreign language, tourism, agriculture and animal husbandry and local handicrafts. (p.3)

When the curriculum development process in Turkey is considered, course schedules are prepared centrally and same programs are applied all over the country. However, schools are free to increase elective courses according to needs of students, conditions of school and environment, and parents' opinions, but this must be approved by the MONE (Ministry of National Education). Textbooks are written by specialists of the MONE and private individuals out of the MONE. Lastly, these textbooks are approved by the TTKB. This shows that the final decision is done by the central governing body. Besides, Gülcan's (2003) study about the structural problems of Turkish Education System in the process of candidacy to the European Union indicates that Turkish Education System is more centralized with respect to European Union members; there are overlapping duties between units of MONE; there are local units which are more than needed and there is need for reconstruction of units of ministry (Gülcan, 2003). This centralized system brings some problems along with itself. These problems are (Çoker, 1995; Eryılmaz, 1995; Gözübüyük, 1989 as cited in Kurt, 2006):

1. Increased bureaucracy, delays in acts and requests, not able to respond to the emergent needs.
2. Less appropriate and coherent services and investments in local.

3. Not enough participation of public to the decisions related with themselves.
4. Making the local civil servants' responsibilities as asking questions to the central authorities, waiting their decisions, and applying their behests.
5. Distribution of public services according to the latest government's thoughts and not enabling the control of these public services in local.
6. Major political activities in the center, as a result politicians do not have chance to gain experience in local.
7. Decreased efficient services and public sources cannot be used efficiently. (p.62)

Besides these problems, there are also problems related with the content of the curriculum in centralized system. According to Turkey's Children Preliminary Report constituted by Turkish Statistical Institute on December 1999, curriculum prepared at the national level may not be appropriate for the conditions of rural life (<http://www.die.gov.tr/CIN/got-unicef/sotc/sotc.htm>). Consequently, this may be one of the indications of a need to a curriculum which considers local characteristics, needs and differences.

There have been many researches about the new elementary school curriculum. Three of the most comprehensive ones are realized by Professors Committee in Curriculum and Instruction Field in 2005 in Eskişehir, Education Reform Initiative (ERG) also in 2005 and Educational Research and Development Directorate (EARGED). Both reports done by Professors Committee in Curriculum and Instruction Field and Education Reform Initiative are based on document analysis. Report of Professors Committee in Curriculum and Instruction Field emphasizes issues that are not considered during the preparation of the curriculum, such as appropriateness to country's philosophy, not considering previous curriculum reforms and their scientific feedback, basing only one educational approach, adaptation of other countries' curricula, time devoted to preparation of curriculum, insufficient pilot study in time and coverage dimensions, lack of in-service trainings for teachers and not collaborating with experts of the field. Moreover, the report prepared by ERG (2005) encompasses issues about educational approaches, new concepts, changing role of stakeholders, and issues about the implementation

dimension of the new elementary school curriculum. Results of both reports are presented in detail in the Chapter 2 review of the literature.

However, a practical study about the implementation of the new elementary school curriculum is realized by EARGED in 2005 and presents a report about the results of this study. During this study they gain data from administrators, class observations, parents and teachers. According to results of this study, there are both strengths and weaknesses of the new elementary school curriculum.

Strengths of the curriculum (Grade 1 – 5) are listed as (EARGED, 2005):

1. Student-centeredness, active student
2. Leading students to make research
3. Relatedness with everyday life
4. Helping to discover students' abilities and improving these abilities
5. Helping students to learn about their environment and society and make use of them
6. Making instructional process enjoyable for students
7. Leading teachers to improve themselves and research
8. Increasing communication between students
9. Having judgmental reasoning approach
10. Increasing students' ability to express themselves and self confidence
11. Giving flexibility to teachers
12. Having interdisciplinary approach
13. Increasing interdependence between teachers
14. Helping to discover students' strengths and weaknesses
15. Increasing collaboration between students
16. Providing students to improve hand writing style. (p.405)

Weaknesses of the curriculum (Grade 1 – 5) are listed as (EARGED, 2005):

1. Too many students in classes, not having the ability to make one to one communication

2. Assessment and evaluation methods are not understood completely and take time
3. Materials, textbooks and resource books should be prepared beforehand
4. Technique structure of the curriculum is explained teachers, but multiple intelligence, active learning, concept maps, portfolio usage, process evaluation, drama method, effective questioning methods, application of project, individual development, etc. are not effectively explained to teachers
5. Lack of physical equipments, visual and technological resources
6. Not considering regional differences and environmental conditions
7. Curriculum is not introduced to society and especially to parents. (p.405)

Above item 6 stated as “New elementary school curriculum does not consider regional differences and environmental conditions” is emphasized and perceptions about educational needs of students and classroom teachers’ needs with respect to the new elementary school curriculum in Kars Province are taken as motives to conduct the current research.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

This study examines the perceptions of classroom teachers and teacher educators with regard to the new elementary school curriculum and its implementation in Kars. It tries to reveal its strengths and weaknesses, students’ educational needs from the window of local characteristics of Kars, and classroom teachers’ needs about the new elementary school curriculum.

This study more specifically attempts to answer the following research questions

1. What are classroom teachers’ perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum (Grade 1 - 5) in relation to objectives, content, instructional methods, resources, and assessment and evaluation dimensions in Kars?
 - 1.1. What are the strengths and weaknesses classroom teachers confront with regard to the new elementary school curriculum in Kars?

- 1.2. What are the educational needs of elementary school students and classroom teachers about the new elementary school curriculum in Kars?
2. What are the teacher educators' perceptions (Faculty and teaching assistants) about the new elementary school curriculum (Grade 1 – 5) in relation to objectives, content, instructional methods, resources, and assessment and evaluation dimensions in Kars?
 - 2.1. What are teacher educators' perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses classroom teachers confront about the new elementary school curriculum in Kars?
 - 2.2. What are teacher educators' perceptions about the needs of classroom teachers with regard to the new elementary school curriculum in Kars?

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study is of significance to the domain of the new elementary school curriculum as it extends the knowledge base that currently exists in that field. From the light of the ideas mentioned above, there is a consensus that the new elementary school curriculum has both strengths and weaknesses in different dimensions (philosophy and approaches behind the curriculum, issues related with implementation of curriculum, etc.). However, these studies lack information about local educational needs of students and teachers from the perspective of local characteristics, and possible suggestions to overcome these weaknesses classroom teachers confront while implementing the new elementary school curriculum in Kars.

When theses and dissertations about the new elementary school curriculum realized between 2006 and 2009 are examined from National Thesis Center database of Higher Education Council (HEC), it is observed that there are eight master theses (Binler, 2007; Elyıldırım, 2006; Kayalar, 2007; Kılıçoğlu, 2007; Kırtay, 2007; Özkesemen, 2008; Senger, 2007; Yeşiltaş, 2006) carried out with the sample selected from Kars Province. Among these eight theses, Binler's (2007) and Elyıldırım's (2006) studies are about instructional methods dimension of the new

elementary school curriculum, and Binler (2007) tries to determine science and technology teachers' level of usage and tendency in instructional methods while Elyıldırım (2006) determines teachers' level in instructional methods usage; Yeşiltaş's (2006) study, on the other hand, is about the resource dimension of the new elementary school curriculum and he examines the students' academic performance based on an achievement test; Kılıçoğlu (2007) examines objective, content, instructional process, assessment and evaluation dimensions of the new 4th and 5th grade elementary school social science curriculum through social science teachers' views; the others, Kayalar 's (2007), Kırtay's (2007), Özkesemen's (2008) and Senger's (2007) studies are instead of studying the dimensions of the new elementary school curriculum, Kayalar (2007) evaluates 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade life studies curriculum based on teachers' views, Kırtay (2007) examines problems related with the implementation of 4th and 5th grade social science curriculum and gives some suggestions, and lastly Senger (2007) determines teachers' views about the new elementary school curriculum based on constructivist approach.

Within these theses, none of them consider students' educational needs and classroom teachers' needs with respect to the new elementary school curriculum under local conditions. Only Senger's (2007) "The constructive approach and teachers' views related to the curriculum according to the constructivist approach (Kars Case)" thesis results show that the new elementary school curriculum does not consider regional and local differences of students issue based on the perspectives of participant teachers. However, Senger's (2007) study does not include the strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers confront while implementing the new elementary school curriculum based on each dimension of curriculum, teachers' suggestions for overcoming the weaknesses, teacher educators' perceptions, etc. Other theses as understood are generally about reaching goals defined in individual course curriculum, teachers' point of views about individual course curriculum, teachers' usage of instructional methods, if materials usage affects students' achievement and problems lived by teachers during implementation of individual course curriculum and possible solutions.

This study, on the other hand, aims to raise an awareness in different dimensions; perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers face with the new elementary school curriculum and its implementation in Kars, and also examines the students' educational needs, classroom teachers' needs and Kars' local characteristics from the perspectives of classroom teachers; and teacher educators' perceptions about strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers face during the implementation of the curriculum, and classroom teachers' needs about the curriculum.

Classroom teachers are practicing the curriculum in Kars conditions and teacher educators are thought to be theoreticians and have background knowledge about Kars conditions. Furthermore, examining both classroom teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions about these issues is also useful in providing clues about reality and this study may provide policy makers a deeper knowledge about the implementation of the new elementary school curriculum from the perspectives of practicing classroom teachers and teacher educators who are thought to be theoreticians.

1.4. Definitions of Terms

Key terms of this study are given as follows in alphabetic order.

Classroom Teacher: A teacher who teaches or is responsible to teach particular courses from first to fifth grade or if there is not any branch teachers of mathematics, science and technology, English as a foreign language, physical education, visual arts, religion culture and moral knowledge, etc. classroom teachers are responsible to teach these courses in their elementary schools from grade 1 - 5, too.

Local Educational Need: The gap between what local educational status is and what should be the local educational status.

Local Characteristics in Kars: The social, economic, cultural, geographical and climate conditions of Kars.

New Elementary School Curriculum: The curriculum of first cycle elementary education (Grade 1 – 5) and includes all subject matter areas classroom teachers are responsible to teach.

Perception: It is the process of attaining awareness or understanding of sensory information (Encyclopedia Britannica Online Dictionary, n.d.), or in other words, “perception relates to how we make sense of our environment” (Rookes, and Willson, 2000, p.2).

Teacher Educator: Academicians that are practicing in faculties of education and ranges from teaching assistants to full professors.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents the literature about the definition of curriculum and its dimensions; elementary school curriculum practices in Turkey between 1923 and 2009; presentation of the new elementary school curriculum (Grade 1 – 5); and responsibilities defined for stakeholders of the new elementary school curriculum; and studies realized about the new elementary school curriculum. Lastly, the chapter ends with the summary of literature presented.

2.1. Definition of Curriculum

The term curriculum is first used as early as 1820s in Scotland, but curriculum term has become an educational term in the United States nearly a century later (Dillard and Sktberg, 2005). In addition, Latin word *currere* (to run) is the word which the curriculum is derived from.

There are various definitions of curriculum and this shows the dynamism of the field. Most behavioral, some managerial and systems people agree with “a plan for action or a written document that includes strategies for achieving desired goals or ends” as a curriculum definition. Humanistic curricularists, on the other hand, defined curriculum as “all the experiences children have under guidance of teachers” (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004, pp.10-11).

According to literature review done by Dillard and Sktberg (2005), common components of the definition of curriculum are as follows (Beauchamp, 1968; Doll,

1996; Longstreet and Shane, 1993; Ornstein and Hunkins, 1993; Wiles and Bondi, 1989 as cited in Dillard, and Sktberg, 2005):

1. Preselected goals / outcomes to be achieved
2. Selected content with specific sequencing in a program of study
3. Processes and experiences to facilitate learning
4. Resources used
5. The extent of responsibility for learning assumed by the teacher and learner
6. How and where learning takes place. (p.91)

These common components of the curriculum definitions stated by Dillard and Sktberg (2005) are evaluated in the proceeding part under dimensions of curriculum.

2.2. Dimensions of Curriculum

Curriculum has four main aspects of educational provision and they are intimately related to each other; objectives, content, instructional process, and assessment and evaluation (Demirel, 2007; Quinn, 2000). As well, Tyler (1949 as cited in Kelly, 2004) suggests that curriculum has to be seen as consisting of four elements or dimensions; objectives, content or subject matter, methods or procedures and evaluation. Tyler (1949 as cited in Kelly, 2004) also lists the four fundamental questions to be answered during curriculum planning are:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

This linear model of curriculum planning requires curriculum planners to define their objectives, to specify the content and methods which will lead to achieve these objectives and last step is the measuring of the extent of how much the objectives

are attained (Kelly, 2004). On the other hand, this linear model of curriculum planning lacks information about resources used during implementation of curriculum specifically.

In addition, according to Gözütok (2003), curriculum is composed of five dimensions which are objectives, content that is appropriate with objectives, instructional methods, supportive resources, and assessment and evaluation methods to determine the how much the objectives are gained by the learners. In this study, also dimensions of curriculum are taken similar to Gözütok's classification of curriculum's dimensions; objectives, content, instructional methods, resources, and assessment and evaluation. The reason behind this choice is to evaluate each dimension in depth and give more chance to both classroom teachers and teacher educators to explain their thoughts in a detailed way. Each of these dimensions of curriculum (Objectives, content, instructional process including instructional methods and resources, and assessment and evaluation) is explained in the following parts, respectively.

2.2.1. Objectives

Objective concept has been in use in curriculum discourse at least since Franklin Bobbitt first tried to “*discover*” objectives by surveying his students to determine what activities adults typically performed, but it has not been established that Bobbitt is the first educator to use the concept objective (Wise, 1975). Objectives are generally defined as characteristics or outcomes that are wanted to be attained by students (Demirel, 2007). They are defined in more specific terms as the outcomes of the curriculum of project being studied.

Aims, goals and objectives are different terms; translating aims into goals and finally objectives, it starts from long time framework, to the more specific, short time sequence (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). In other words, there is a technical distinction between aims and goals, and objectives. This distinction is summarized by Wise (1975) under two dimensions; *level of specificity* and *span in time*.

Bloom (1956) developed the taxonomy of educational objectives. The taxonomy of objectives has three main domains and they are categorized according to level of behavior; the most simple to highly complex. The three main domains are cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Cognitive domain is about knowledge and intellectual abilities, affective domain is about attitudes, values, interests and appreciations and psychomotor is concerned about motor skills (Quinn, 2000). In cognitive domain, there are six levels objectives; knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Five major categories of affective domain are receiving phenomena, responding to phenomena, valuing, organization and characterization. The seven major categories of psychomotor domain includes perception, set, guided response, mechanism, complex overt response, adaptation and organization (Bloom, Mesia, and Krathwohl, 1964 as cited in Quinn, 2000).

“*Objective*” concept is a recent one used with the new elementary school curriculum instead of “*behavior*” concept used in the previous one. It encompasses knowledge, skill, understanding and attitudes. The report of ERG (2005) also indicates these issues and states that using objective concept is not a superficial approach; instead, using this concept shows the appropriateness to philosophy behind the curriculum. Moreover, there is an attitude towards student-centered approach with this new terminology. At the same time, ERG (2005) reports that the new elementary school curriculum emphasizes skills, such as critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, problem solving, research, decision making, ICT usage, entrepreneurship, giving importance to individual and social values.

2.2.2. Content

Content component includes subject index that are consistent with objectives and is defined as “facts, ideas, concepts, processes, generalizations, attitudes, beliefs, and skills which students interact as they experience a curriculum” (Klein, 1991, p.33). According to Kelly (2004), the content of we expect children to learn during their schooling is clearly a crucial element in curriculum planning, whatever view we take of education, curriculum or indeed knowledge itself. Besides, Variş (1994) emphasizes that curriculum developers should consider these criteria during

selection of content: Social benefit, individual benefit, teaching and learning, information structure and she adds there may be other criteria to be benefitted.

Moreover, Bobbitt (1918) defines the objectives as the necessary skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge that are necessary for human life, and summarizes how to define the content of the curriculum appropriate to objectives as follows:

The central theory of curriculum is simple. Human life, however varied, consists in the performance of specific activities. Education that prepares for life is one that prepares definitely and adequately for these specific activities. However numerous and diverse they may be for any social class they can be discovered. This requires only that one go out into the world of affairs and discover the particulars of which their affairs consist. These will show the abilities, attitudes, habits, appreciations and forms of knowledge that men need. These will be the objectives of the curriculum. They will be numerous, definite and particularized. The curriculum will then be that series of experiences which children and youth must have by way of obtaining those objectives. (p.42)

This quotation gathered from Bobbitt presents that human beings need to learn some specific abilities, attitudes, habits, appreciations and forms of knowledge for living a consistent life with others, these are named as objectives. And the learning experiences or the content are prepared appropriate to objectives of the curriculum for achieving them.

When the preparation of content of the new elementary school curriculum is considered, there are some issues regarded like:

1. Learning is not formed from pieces of life; instead, there is a holistic understanding.
2. Facts, concepts, principles, methods and approaches in every field are prepared for helping learning and represented in different representation styles while content preparation.
3. Learning and motivation principles are considered.
4. The balance between individualization and socialization are considered (TTKB, 2005a).

Thus, the new elementary school curriculum has a holistic perspective that considers a balance between individualization and socialization. Appropriate with the content or subject matter of the curriculum, instructional process (teaching

strategies, methods and resources) is determined and this is covered in the next part in detail.

2.2.3. Instructional Process

Instructional process is the process in which desired behaviors to be attained by students are formed, and it covers teaching strategies, methods and resources (Demirel, 2007). As known from the definition of curriculum, learners attain objectives through some activities. The main purpose of this process is to find the answer to question “*how to help learn better*”; basic questions are “*what to teach*” and “*how to teach it*” (Seel and Dijkstra, 2004). Materials and resources used during this process can be defined with objects, places, and place used to facilitate the learning process – “the tools used to assist learning; resource people, textbooks, magazines, computers and software, videotapes, records, games, realia, and the fixtures of schooling such as chalk, chalkboards, crayons, scissors, and special laboratories with their essential equipment” (Klein, 1991, p.34).

ICT usage as a resource has a significant part in implementation of the new elementary school curriculum. As Cope and Ward (2002) mention that successful integration of ICT usage in classrooms offers a wide range of valuable benefits for teaching and learning. MONE has allocated considerable funding for the use of computers in the teaching and learning process since 1984 when ICT is first introduced to schools (Demiraslan and Usluel, 2008). ICT usage transform schools and classrooms by bringing in new curriculum based on real world problems, providing scaffolds and tools to enhance learning, giving students and teachers more opportunities for feedback and reflection, and building local and global communities that include students, teachers, parents, practicing scientists, and other interested parties (Kozma and Anderson, 2002 as cited in Kok, 2006). There are also other principles guided the preparation of instructional process in the new elementary school curriculum. These are:

1. Learning is encouraged in students only through arousing research desire and curiosity.

2. Instead of teachers or students to explain the content, learning is formed through student-centered activities and active participation of students.
3. The main purpose is transferring what is learned to other mediums, and using them in an active and a creative way.
4. Main content is composed of problems, life style, economic activities, and geographical factors of students' near surroundings.
5. Collaboration between students should be encouraged.
6. School is not just composed of four walls; it is composed of the students' environment.
7. Education should direct students to other resources than textbooks.
8. Students' participation to various social services in their schools and neighborhood are encouraged (TTKB, 2005a).

These principles appropriate to the philosophy behind the new elementary school curriculum are considered while preparation of instructional process. To summarize the instructional process in general, Wiggins and McTighe (1998) suggest answering following questions:

1. What enabling knowledge and skills will students need to perform effectively and achieve desired results?
2. What activities will equip students with the needed knowledge and skills?
3. What will need to be taught and coached, and how should it best be taught, in the light of performance goals?
4. What materials and resources are best suited to accomplish these goals?
5. Is the overall design effective? (p.13)

The answers to these questions will guide teachers or curriculum developers to construct this process with appropriate methods and resources. In the next part, how to answer the question "*is the overall design effective?*" is explained.

2.2.4. Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation component includes the methods for controlling to which degree the objectives attained by learners (Demirel, 2007). Evaluation is concerned with two approaches; product and process evaluation. Product evaluation

is an evaluation of student performance in a specific learning context and process evaluation is about examining the experiences and activities involved in the learning situation; making judgments about the process by which students acquired learning or examining the learning experience before it has been concluded (Print, 1993).

There are three types of evaluation; formative, diagnostic and summative. In formative evaluation, it is aimed to provide information on learner performance at one or more points during the learning process and it also gives information to both the learner and teacher about how well the student is progressing during the learning process. In summative evaluation, it is aimed to make a general assessment of the students' development. The last type evaluation is diagnostic evaluation, in this type it is aimed to determine prerequisite entry behavior and skills, the extent of prior mastery of course objectives and is done for placement purposes (Bloom, 1971 as cited in Print, 1993).

The new elementary school curriculum presents a different assessment and evaluation understanding from the previous one. The new elementary school curriculum encourages alternative assessment and evaluation methods. Alternative assessment can be described as an alternative to standardized testing and all of the problems found in such testing. It is important to note that there is not a single definition of alternative assessment (Richards and Renandya, 2002). Furthermore, main goal of the alternative assessment is to gather evidence about how students are approaching, processing, and completing real life tasks in a particular domain (Garcia and Pearson, 1994 as cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002). There are some alternative methods suggested by the new elementary school curriculum like concept map, portfolio, self, peer and group assessment, control list, performance task, project, rubric, etc.

According to Article 32 of Regulation of Elementary Education Institutions (İlköğretim Kurumları Yönetmeliği), students' success is measured and evaluated based on the objectives defined in the curriculum. This article also presents the interaction between dimensions of curriculum, especially between the objectives and assessment and evaluation.

There are also principles guided the preparation of assessment and evaluation dimension in the new elementary school curriculum. These are:

1. Assessment and evaluation is an integral part of learning.
2. Not only the outcome of learning and also the learning process are evaluated.
3. Appropriate assessment and evaluation methods monitor the students' development.
4. Assessment and evaluation system both monitor school's all functions and direct its development.
5. Obeying discipline system and rules is for the sake of students and due to this, students should undertake this responsibility.
6. Alternative assessment and evaluation methods are encouraged beside the classic assessment and evaluation methods (TTKB, 2005a).

These principles emphasize the ideas about assessment and evaluation dimension of the new elementary school curriculum and the theoretical framework mentioned above.

There have been six radical changes in elementary school curricula between 1923 and 2009. These changes (1924, 1926, 1936, 1948, 1968 and 2005 elementary school curricula) are explained in a chronological order in the proceeding parts.

2.3. Elementary School Curriculum Practices in Turkey (1923 - 2009)

Elementary education is the basic and compulsory stage of formal education. Since April 20th 1924 with Article 87 of the Constitution (Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu), elementary education is compulsory for every Turkish citizen and free of charge in state schools. Moreover, in 1st Article of Elementary Education Law (222/1961) states that elementary education is the basic schooling that serves all Turks of both sexes and their physical, mental and moral development in accordance with national aim. Besides, 2nd Article of Elementary Education Law (222/1961) indicates that elementary education is given in elementary education institutions; it is compulsory for children of school age and free of charge in state schools. These all articles

passed into law in different years present the legal background of the elementary education.

According to the National Education Basic Act, number 1739, from 1973 (as cited in Gümüő, 2008):

The general goals of National Education are; to raise all individuals as citizens who are committed to the principles and reforms of Atatürk and to the nationalism of Atatürk as expressed in the constitution, who adopt, protect and promote the national, moral, human, spiritual and cultural values of the Turkish nation, who love and always seek to exalt their family, country and nation, who know their duties and responsibilities towards the Republic of Turkey which is democratic, secular and social state governed by the rule of law, founded on human rights and on the tenets laid down in the preamble to the Constitution, and who have internalized these in their behavior. (p.58)

Based on the Article 23 of National Education Act, no. 1739 mentioned above; “elementary education provides children; to instill the basic knowledge, skills, attitudes and customs necessary for becoming a good citizen; to educate children to abide by the national code of ethics; to educate every Turkish child in terms of each subject, skill and capability; and to prepare the same for life and higher education” (Gümüő, 2008, p.56).

These knowledge, skills, attitudes, etc. expressed with Article 23 is achieved by students through curriculum. Since the establishment of Turkish Republic, there have been six elementary school curriculum practices (1924, 1926, 1936, 1948, 1968 and 2005 elementary school curricula). The historical changes with regard to the elementary school curriculum beginning with Republic Period up to new elementary school curriculum are summarized in the following parts. The new elementary school curriculum is presented in another section following previous changes in elementary school curriculum.

2.3.1. Elementary School Curriculum Practices after Establishment of Turkish Republic (1923 – 2005)

After Constitutional (Meşrutiyet) years, not having a curriculum or continuous changes in curriculum, quality problems, wars, inconsistencies and being naïve are

the reasons of failure of educational movements (Ergün, 1997). Since the establishment of Turkish Republic, elementary school curricula are prepared in the light of Atatürk's understanding of education. Atatürk's understanding of education has the following characteristics; education should be national, secular, scientific, equivalent to everyone and functional (Akyüz, 2009; Kaya, 1989 as cited in Tazebay, Çelenk, Tertemiz and Kalayci, 2000). These characteristics have guided the curriculum practices throughout The Republic Period. In addition, some of the main concerns about education since being a Republic are unification of all schooling areas, organizing education, improving the quality of education and spreading education all over the country (Güvenç, 1998; Keskin, 2002).

There have been many trials and practices in elementary school curriculum to reach excellence. In the proceeding paragraphs; 1924, 1926, 1936, 1948 and 1968 elementary school curricula practices are explained in a chronological order.

a. 1924 Elementary School Curriculum

First elementary school curriculum is established in 1924 with the name "1924 Elementary School Curriculum (1924 İlk Mektep Müfredat Programı)" and is in use about two years. This curriculum is prepared during First and Second Ulama Commission (Heyet-i İlmiye). First Ulama Commission is realized between 15th of July and 15th of August in 1923. Some basic topics of this commission are changes in elementary school curriculum and changes in elementary education enactment. Decisions of Second Ulama Commission in 1924 are decreasing six years elementary education to five years and development of elementary school curriculum (MONE, 1995 as cited in Akbaba, 2004).

Furthermore, John Dewey is invited Turkey in 1924 in order to learn and benefit from his views about structure, vision and general characteristics of education. This curriculum is prepared differently for boys and girls, do not have special goals of each lesson, and content of the lessons (especially in history lesson) are changed with respect to Ottoman period curricula (Tazebay et. al, 2000). 1924 elementary

school curriculum is a transition curriculum used until 1926 elementary school curriculum that is covered in the next part.

b. 1926 Elementary School Curriculum

Second elementary school curriculum starts to be in use in 1926 and its name is “1926 Elementary School Curriculum (1926 İlk Mektep Müfredat Programı).” This curriculum has its roots in Third Ulama Commission (Heyet-i İlmiye) realized in 1925 and Mustafa Necati Uğural, Minister of National Education Ministry, also considers John Dewey’s report in preparation of this curriculum. Dewey’s thoughts about “life science, collective education (Toplu Tedris) and work school (İş Okul)” are the main bases of this curriculum (Wilson and Başgöz, 1973, p.107 as cited in Akbaba, 2004).

This curriculum is prepared with respect to countries’ needs, students’ characteristics and the education understanding of other countries in that times (Gözütok, 2003). The primary purpose of this curriculum is to educate good citizens by adapting them through active participation to their environment (Tazebay et. al, 2000). According to Tazebay et. al (2000), 1926 Elementary School Curriculum is the first comprehensive curriculum of Turkish Republic.

In 1930, it is thought that 1926 curriculum is not appropriate for the condition of villages and “Village Schools Curriculum (Köy Mekteplerine Mahsus Müfredat Programı)” is established. And this curriculum has been used until 1948 (Gözütok, 2003; Tazebay et. al, 2000).

c. 1936 Elementary School Curriculum

Third elementary school curriculum is “1936 Elementary School Curriculum (1936 İlkokul Programı).” This curriculum embraces six arrows (Republicanism, nationalism, statism, secularism, populism and revolutionism) of People’s Republican Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) in its goals (Tazebay et. al, 2000).

This curriculum is different from previous ones due to first establishment of elementary school's education principles. These principles are (Tazebay et. al, 2000):

1. School is a national education institution.
2. School is a sample of society.
3. School should be a place to make students active.
4. School should provide students to learn reasoning and thinking.
5. All lessons should be appropriate to students' levels.
6. Students individual differences should be considered.
7. Close fatherland and time principle should be considered.
8. Practical information and skills should be given importance.
9. National economical situation should be given importance in determining all activities in schools.
10. Collective education system (Toplu Tedris Sistemi) should be used in first three classes of elementary school. (p.43-44)

These principles indicate that this curriculum gives importance to students' development level, additionally topics are tried to be given to students starting from their close environment, and collective education system (Toplu Tedris) is used in first three years of elementary education and lately life science course is separated into different branches.

d. 1948 Elementary School Curriculum

Fourth elementary school curriculum is "1948 Elementary School Curriculum (1948 İlkokul Programı)." This curriculum is in use about 20 years, and its goals are parallel with 1936 Elementary School Curriculum but they are more comprehensive (Tazebay et. al, 2000). The main goal of this curriculum is (Gülcan, Türkeli, Parabakan, Şölen and Albayrak, 2003):

Nation expects entire necessary values and ideals to be gained by students through elementary school curriculum. Elementary schools are responsible for teaching students national culture. Main purpose of elementary school is

to help students in teaching common values and ideals by teaching necessary information, customs and interests. (p.128)

1948 Elementary school curriculum is criticized due to high number of courses, topics and unites, not being appropriate to children's cognitive levels, not having an interdisciplinary approach, not enough time devoted to topics, including too much knowledge, not giving an opportunity to skill and habits, not being flexible, not being appropriate to individual differences and also difficulty in using compound class system (Birleřtirilmiř sınıf sistemi) (Akbaba, 2004).

e. 1968 Elementary School Curriculum

In 1952, K. V. Wofford came to Turkey for examining the village schools and preparing a report about his observations. Based on his report, a systematic manner is employed in preparation of curriculum. At the same time, Fifth National Education Convention is realized in 1953 and there are some decisions taken about elementary school curriculum practice in that time. Results of 1953 National Education Convention (MONE, 1953) are:

1. Curriculum should be prepared by considering needs of the society.
2. In accordance with curriculum development, textbooks and resource books should be prepared.
3. Teachers should be educated appropriate to new curriculum.
4. Curriculum prepared should be evaluated in commissions and piloted in different regions during two years.
5. With respect to feedbacks, curriculum piloted should be improved and applied all over the country.

These results show the need for a comprehensive curriculum development in that time. Fifth elementary school curriculum is "1968 Elementary School Curriculum (1968 İlkokul Programı)" and it can be concluded that it is prepared based on the understanding of Fifth National Education Convention results.

This curriculum has its roots from the 1962 Elementary School Curriculum Draft. This draft has been piloted in 106 schools of 14 different cities for five years and later in 1964-1965 academic year, it is piloted in 1888 different schools (Tekiřik,

1969 as cited in Tazebay et. al, 2000). According to the results of these pilot studies, there have been some changes in curriculum and 1968 Elementary School Curriculum is prepared and started to be used. This curriculum has been the most influential one and applied in the longest life span.

Until the last radical change in 2005 about elementary school curriculum, there have been some changes about educational laws and individual courses' curriculum. These are covered in next part briefly.

f. Curriculum Studies between 1968 and 2005

In 1973, compulsory education is increased to eight years with the Basic National Education Law 1789 but it is not applied until 1997. In 1982, a new program model is prepared through the collaboration of universities and presented by MONE. This new model provides curriculum planners to determine general, unit and subjects goals, besides; every unit has its own determined behaviors. Elementary curricula prepared between 1985 and 1988 is alike 1968 elementary school curriculum; they have the same elementary schools goals, basic principles of teaching and learning in elementary schools, implementation of curriculum, besides; appropriateness to close environment, subjects and units, methods and techniques, planning and implementation sections (Gülcan et. al, 2003).

After 1980, there are changes in individual courses as summarized by Akbaba (2004) in Table 1 below. These changes are realized with respect to individual courses as follows:

Table 1

Changes in Individual Courses' Curriculum After 1980

Subject	Year of development of the subject
Turkish language	1981
Mathematics	1983
Physical education	1987
Hand crafts education	1990
Social sciences	1990
Science	1992
Paint	1992
Religious culture and moral knowledge	1992
Environment, health, reading and traffic	1992
Music	1994
Foreign language (English, German, French)	1997
Traffic and first aid	1997
Science	2000
Religious culture and moral knowledge	2000

Adapted from: Akbaba, T. (2004).

Under the guidance of the National Education Development Project supported by the World Bank, it is planned to develop high quality instructional materials and textbooks for improving the level of schooling in Turkey (Koç, Işıkşal and Bulut, 2007). With Law no 4306 dated in 1997, elementary education is extended to eight years from the beginning of 1997 – 1998 academic year.

The new elementary school curriculum is the last radical change in elementary school curriculum. These are many reasons behind this change. Besides, there are new educational issues come into scene with it in Turkey. These are covered under the presentation of the new elementary school curriculum section.

2.3.2. Presentation of the New Elementary School Curriculum (2005 - Onward)

Education is a dynamic field and there are always attempts to change its components with respect to changes in the society, and societal needs are always rationale of curriculum development processes. As Oliva (1988) said “Curriculum change is unavoidable, because life grows and develops through change,” it implies the inevitability of the process.

The reasons and preparation process of the new elementary school curriculum, basic principles and approaches behind it, its fundamentals, common skills and

presentation of structure of lessons are presented in detail, respectively in the next parts.

2.4. Reasons and Preparation of the New Elementary School Curriculum

There have been three project agreements which amount to 690.2 million dollar between 1990 and 2003 (Keskin, 2003). These project agreements are; the National Education Development Project (Milli Eđitimi Geliřtirme Projesi) amounts 90.2 million dollar, the Basic Education Project (Temel Eđitime Destek Projesi) amounts to 300 million dollar, and the Basic Education Project II (Temel Eđitime Destek Projesi II) amounts to 300 million dollar (Eđitim Sen, 2005). Changes in curriculum development process are based on the protocol signed between Turkey and World Bank in 1990. This protocol is known as National Education Development Project; according to this project it is aimed to improve the quality of elementary and secondary school education, the quality of teacher education and to determine new management strategies (MONE, 1999). “Support to Basic Education Project,” which is signed between Turkey and European Council, also is effective in this curriculum development process.

Some of the reasons of establishing a new curriculum according to TTKB (2005a) are:

1. With respect to research results of other sciences and changes in the understanding of teaching and learning in educational sciences, there is a need to change the curriculum.
2. Increasing the quality and equality in education.
3. Considering economical and democratic needs in education.
4. There is a need to develop the curriculum by considering individual and national values from the window of global values.
5. Reluctance of most students to learning and schools due to curriculum in use.
6. Curriculum is too comprehensive and based on rote learning; teachers do not have time to finish all topics.

7. Topics are not appropriate to students' age, development level and their curiosity and interests.
8. Topics in secondary school and elementary school curricula coincide due to eight education systems; education system does not have a unity.
9. Topics in elementary school are not related with real life issues.
10. 1st to 8th grade topics do not have a unity.
11. Lessons are not parallel to each other adequately.
12. Creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration skills become more important due to economical and societal developments.
13. Self expression, establishing communication, entrepreneurship become dominant in raising new generations.
14. Students are not enough successful in national and international exams.

Besides these reasons, developments in knowledge society, life long learning understanding, appropriateness to European Union norms, results of PISA, TIMMS, PIRLS, etc. are also affective in this curriculum development process (TTKB, 2005a).

Due to many reasons explained above, nine different countries' curricula are examined, 114 thesis and dissertations are analyzed and their indications are used. 37 different nongovernmental organizations are invited to Başkent Teacher House and their ideas are taken. 25 different nongovernmental organizations' views are taken through formal correspondence. 2133 teachers' views are taken through curriculum development process. 697 inspectors' views are reflected to the curriculum and curriculum developers benefit from 9192 parents' and 26304 students' views (Kıroğlu, Akbayır, Baki, Öztürk, Çepni, and Baysal, 2006).

The new elementary school curriculum is piloted in 120 elementary schools in 9 different provinces (Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Bolu, Diyarbakır, Samsun, Hatay, Kocaeli, and Van) during 2004-2005 academic year. After pilot study, with respect to feedback and results of the pilot study, some changes are realized. And last form of the curriculum has been in use all over the country since 2005-2006 academic year.

There are some principles and approaches affected the new elementary school curriculum. These basic principles and approaches are constructivism, thematic approach, active learning, student-centeredness, multiple intelligence and appropriateness to individual differences. In the next part these are covered in detail.

2.5. Basic Principles and Approaches behind the New Elementary School Curriculum

This part encompasses topics; constructivism, its types, thematic approach, active learning, student centeredness, multiple intelligence theory and appropriateness to individual differences, respectively.

2.5.1. Constructivism and its Types

Nowadays it is anticipated from individuals to produce knowledge rather than to consume it. As a Farsi proverb says “A well must produce its own water.” Besides, contemporary world wants individuals not to accept knowledge that is transmitted, to orient or to shape them; instead learners are active in interpreting knowledge during that process. “As long as there are people asking each other questions, we have had constructivist classrooms. Constructivism, the study of learning, is about how we all make sense of our world” said Jasqueline Grennan Brooks (Brooks and Brooks, 1999, p.1) and this implies that constructivist approach has been used in the classrooms for a long time.

Constructivism is one of the most influential theories in contemporary education and learning theories, but there is no single definition of constructivism (Glaserfeld, 1992). It has its roots back to psychology based traditions, like Dewey (1966), Bruner (1962, 1966), Piaget (1970) and Vygotsky (1978). Perkins (1992, p.49 as cited in Newhouse, 2002, p.53) puts it: “Central to the vision of constructivism is the notion of organism as “*as active*” – not just responding to stimuli, as in the behaviorist rubric, but engaging, grappling, and seeking to make sense of things.” Bruner’s theoretical framework states that learning is an active

process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based on their current or past knowledge. During this learning process, the learner selects and transforms information, construct hypotheses, and makes decisions, relying on a cognitive structure to do so (<http://tip.psychology.org/bruner.html>). Von Glasersfeld (1989), on the other hand, defines constructivism as a theory of knowledge with roots in philosophy, psychology and cybernetics.

According to Howe (2003), constructivist learning theory has two basic premises; learning takes as its starting point the knowledge, attitudes and interests learners bring to the learning situation, and secondly learning results from the interaction between these characteristics and experience in such a way that learners construct their own understanding, from the inside.

There are different types of constructivism, such as radical constructivism, cognitive constructivism, social constructivism, postmodern constructivism and information-processing constructivism. Three of them (Radical constructivism, social constructivism and cognitive constructivism) are covered in following parts.

Radical Constructivism

Radical constructivism is defined by Von Glasersfeld, he (1984) has said that:

...learners construct understanding. They do not simply mirror and reflect what they are told or what they read. Learners look for meaning and will try to find regularity and order in the events of the world even in the absence of full or complete information. (p.18)

In addition to this quotation above, radical constructivism is mostly based on “*What is knowledge?*,” “*What is reality?*,” “*What is true?*,” etc. like questions asked in philosophy. It advocates that every individual acquire their truth through synthesis of their experiences and knowledge in the light of science. This can occur differently in different individuals, because everyone’s culture, past experience and their environment are different. This is summarized by Yaşar (1998) as “knowledge is the knowledge of who constituted it, not outer world’s knowledge.”

Based on these, it can be said that radical constructivism is based on two key principles; students construct their own meanings based on what they see or hear and the function of cognition is adaptive and enables students to viable explanations of their experiences.

Social Constructivism

Second type of constructivism covered is social constructivism. It is developed by Lev Vygotsky and explains how children learn, and places more emphasis on the social context of learning. In this type of constructivism, it is believed that learners construct their knowledge through social interaction with their environments. Besides, language and culture are important in learning.

Social constructivism has specific assumptions about *reality*, *knowledge* and *learning*. *Reality* is constructed through human activity and members of a society together invent the properties of the world (Kukla, 2000). In other words, reality does not exist prior to its social interaction. *Knowledge*, on the other hand, is a human product and is socially and culturally constructed (Ernest, 1999; Gredler, 1997). And meaning is created through interactions between individuals and the environment they live. Lastly, *learning* is a social process; it does not take place only within an individual, nor it is a passive development of behaviors that are shaped by external forces (McMahon, 1997).

The role of the teacher is to promote learning through achieving Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This concept means; when faced with a new situation, the learner needs new or more mature psychological tools and mental structure for this particular activity (Chaiklin, 2003). Vygotsky's suggestions for arranging a learning environment are (as cited in Bulut, 2006):

1. Activities should be designed in a way that contribute and improve social interaction.
2. There should be verbal interaction; language helps to internalize the ideas and behaviors.
3. Main purpose of the activities should be to help students to gain knowledge and skills through participation to every section of the activities.

4. Students learn through internalizing outer dialogue, observing their environment. During this process, teachers should be role models.
5. Teachers should be facilitator to improve students' individual learning.
6. There are four phases for students to internalize skills; teachers give verbal samples, students imitate their teachers, teachers retreat when students' knowledge increases and in the last phase students make more applications about the topic.
7. Language and thought are related with each other so, for improving the thought of students, language skills should be improved. (p.22)

These suggestions can be interpreted as learning is a collaborative activity, and constructed in children's own understanding in their minds. Meaningful contexts which knowledge can be applied should be chosen for enhancing learning. Moreover, the learning environment should support the children gain maturity in their new tools as they learn to use them in their environment (Hall, 2007).

Cognitive Constructivism

The last type of constructivism, that is covered, is cognitive constructivism and based on the work of Jean Piaget. In this type of constructivism it is believed that learners construct their knowledge based on their past experiences.

Cognitive constructivists use Piaget's terms "*schemas, assimilation, accommodation and equilibration*" in explaining how learning occurs in individuals. Schemas are used for interpreting and understanding the world, and they are categories knowledge and process of obtaining that knowledge. Assimilation is the process of taking new information into already existing schema. Accommodation involves changing or altering already existing schema through new experience and knowledge. Lastly, equilibration is explained as the balance between assimilation and accommodation.

There are four stages of cognitive development defined by Piaget which vary for every individual, these are sensori-motor in which intelligence is demonstrated through motor activity without the use of symbols, knowledge is based on physical interactions, preoperational stage in which intelligence demonstrated through the

use of symbols, memory and imagination are developed, thinking is non logical and nonreversible, egocentric thinking predominates. In the last two stages, such as in concrete operational stage intelligence is demonstrated through logical and systematic manipulation of symbols related to concrete objects, mental actions are reversible, no more egocentric thought and in formal operational stage intelligence demonstrated through the logical manipulation of symbols related to abstract concepts and many people never attain this stage.

Principles derived from Piaget's thoughts and can be used in activities are as follows (<http://tip.psychology.org/piaget.html>):

1. Children will provide different explanations of reality at different stages of cognitive development.
2. Cognitive development is facilitated by providing activities or situations that engage learners and require adaptation (i.e., assimilation and accommodation).
3. Learning materials and activities should involve the appropriate level of motor or mental operations for a child of given age; avoid asking students to perform tasks that are beyond their current cognitive capabilities.
4. Use teaching methods that actively involve students and present challenges.

These principles can be interpreted as; how students learn in cognitive constructivism are (Bulut, 2006); children's development occurs through different stages (sensori-motor, pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational), first three stages is very important for educators, thoughts formed through activities not words, knowledge cannot be gained in a passive way, learning occurs through concrete experiences. These show that in cognitive constructivism individual and individual's cognitive learning are valuable.

2.5.2. Thematic Approach

Integration of different subject areas from the window of comprehensive and general theme is named as thematic approach (İşler, 2004 as cited in Bulut, 2006). Hoerr (2000) mentions that the premise of thematic instruction is that students learn best when learning is meaningful and defines themes as a unifying concept that

transcends disciplines and content areas. As known, the new elementary school curriculum embraces this thematic approach and it defines learning areas under these themes. It has an interdisciplinary approach and they are related with learning areas.

With this approach, it is hoped that students will have chance to learn efficiently. The reasons of choosing this approach in the new elementary school curriculum are as follows (MONE, 2005):

1. To encourage students and increase students' interest and self confidence in different lessons.
2. To increase students' understanding and respect to others' point of views.
3. To increase students' awareness about connection to their environments and they can also create difference individually.
4. To gain different knowledge and skills through active participation in activities.
5. To increase team spirit in students.
6. To improve students' affective characteristics and study skills.
7. To contribute students' affective characteristics related with school.

These reasons are appropriate to the theoretical background tried to be drawn above; students' meaningful learning is tried to be enhanced with thematic approach.

2.5.3. Active Learning

An important tenet of constructivism is that learning is an idiosyncratic, active and evolving process (Anthony, 1996). This principle of constructivism is active learning in which the learner possesses and uses a variety of cognitive processes during the learning process. Paying attention to relevant information, organizing that information into coherent representations, and integrating these representations with existing knowledge are included in the major cognitive processes (Mayer, 1999). Açıkgöz (2003) defined active learning as the responsibility of learning, making decisions in some parts, opportunities of self regulation and enforcing the

learners to use their intellectual abilities are given in this learning process. Flavell (1976) says that current learning perspectives incorporate three important assumptions (Flavell, 1976 as cited in Anthony, 1996):

1. Learning is a process of knowledge construction, not of knowledge recording or absorption;
2. Learning is a knowledge-dependent; people use current knowledge to construct new knowledge;
3. The learner is aware of the processes of cognition and can control and regulate them; this self-awareness, or metacognition significantly influences the course of learning. (p.349)

There are two types of active learning defined in the literature. In the first usage of active learning, learners have a considerable autonomy and control of direction of the learning activities. In the second usage of active learning, which is given importance by Kyriacou and Marshall (1989 as cited in Anthony, 1996), learners' mental experiences' quality in which there is active intellectual involvement in the learning experience characterized by increased insight. And they (1989 as cited in Anthony, 1996) assert that the major problem facing the marked increase in the use of active learning activities in schools is the tendency of some teachers to believe active learning activities always promote active mental experiences.

Wilson (1996) suggests environments for active learning are comprehensive instructional systems that:

1. Encourage student responsibility and decision making and intentional learning in an atmosphere of collaboration among students and instructors;
2. Promote study and investigation within meaningful and information rich contexts; and
3. Utilize participation in dynamic activities that promote high level thinking processes, including problem solving, experimentation, creativity, discussion, and examination of topics from multiple perspectives. (p.66)

The new elementary school curriculum also enhances active learning through skills like critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, research and inquiry, problem solving, ability to use ICT, entrepreneurship and right usage of Turkish.

These skills are covered under the topic; common skills of the new elementary school curriculum in detail.

2.5.4. Student Centeredness

The starting point of student centeredness is generally accepted as Jean-Jacque Rousseau's publication named as *Emile* in 1762 (Darling, 1994). The thing, that is wanted to be given in this publication, is children discover the world around them as opposed to having it presented to them through the filter of a textbook or teacher. Pestalozzi and Froebel are other important figures in student centered approach. According to Michalowicz and Howard (2003), children learn best by presenting carefully chosen questions or engaging them in very specific activities that is guiding them to certain ideas within the guidance of adults. And Froebel is known with the development of today's kindergarten concept.

The concept "*student centered*" is first used in United States around in the context of constructivism, student-centered instruction is a form of active learning where students are engaged and involved in what they are studying (Brown, 2008). Constructivist learning environment as emphasized in the new elementary curriculum provide a change from a traditional behaviorist teacher-centered environment to one of student-centered, hands-on student involvement as an effective learning process (Brooks and Brooks, 1993).

Brooks and Brooks (1993) defined teachers' role in constructivist classroom are as follows, constructivist teachers:

1. Encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative;
2. Use a wide variety of materials, including raw data, primary sources, and interactive materials and encourage students to use them;
3. Inquire about students' understanding of concepts before sharing his/her own understanding of those concepts;
4. Encourage students to engage in dialogues with the teacher and with one another;

5. Encourage student inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and encourage students to ask questions to each other and seek elaboration of students' initial responses;
6. Engage students in experiences that show contradictions to initial understandings and then encourage discussions;
7. Provide time for students to construct relationships and create metaphors;
8. Assess students' understanding through application and performance of open-structured tasks.

These all responsibilities of teachers can be summarized with the quotation of Albert Einstein; "I never teach my pupil; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn." In other words, student-centeredness can be provided by teachers.

2.5.5. Multiple Intelligence Theory

Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence theory is one of the influential approaches used in preparation of the new elementary school curriculum. Gardner's multiple intelligence theory seeks to broaden the scope of human potential beyond the confines of the IQ (Intelligence Quotient) and seriously questions the validity of determining intelligence through the practice of taking individuals out their natural learning environment and asking them to do isolated tasks they have never done before- and probably would never to choose to do again. He, instead, suggests that intelligence has more to do with the capacity for solving problems and fashioning products in a context-rich and naturalist setting (Armstrong, 2009). Gardner (1993) defines intelligence as the human beings' ability to solve problems or to make something that is valued in one or more culture. This definition of intelligence gives importance to cultural context of intelligence.

There are eight different types of defined by Gardner; linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist intelligences.

1. *Linguistic intelligence* is about the ability to construct and comprehend language, to utilize language, and to learn by speaking, writing, reading, listening.

2. *Logical-mathematical intelligence* is the ability to process logical problems mentally, to use numbers effectively and reason well.
3. *Spatial intelligence* is about the ability to comprehend shapes and images in three dimensions, to perceive and interpret that which may or may not see and to learn by visually.
4. *Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence* is about the ability to learn through activity and to possess a certain control over movement, balance, agility, and grace.
5. *Musical intelligence* is about the ability to learn by performing, through songs, patterns, rhythms, instruments and musical expression.
6. *Interpersonal intelligence* is about the ability to interact with others, to understand them, to interpret their behavior and to learn in groups.
7. *Intrapersonal intelligence* is about the ability to understand and sense ourselves.
8. *Naturalist intelligence* is about the ability to identify and classify patterns in nature, to learn in the context of outdoors, animal and field trips.

Hopper and Hurry (2000) defined three reasons to use multiple intelligence theory in classrooms;

1. Increased awareness about learning process; students have chance to understand and explore their own learning process.
2. Increased emphasis on individual learning process; students have responsibility in their own learning process.
3. Stimulate the active learning process; students' motivation to learn can be increased. (p.27-29)

Saban (2001) defined four other reasons to use multiple intelligence theory in classroom. Multiple intelligence theory views each child as an individual full of different potentials, offers teachers a new pedagogical approach in terms of how their teaching should be, supports cooperation among all teachers in schools and makes students become aware of their own ways of learning.

2.5.6. Appropriateness to Individual Differences

Alvin Toffler says that “The main hope of a nation lies in the proper education for its youth.” This is one of the premises of the new elementary school curriculum; appropriateness to individual differences. These individual differences have been identified as important factors that might affect the students’ learning.

According to Jonassen and Grabowski (1993), individuals differ in many ways; their general skills, aptitudes, and preferences for processing information, constructing meaning from it, and applying it to new situations; in their abilities to perform different school based or real world learning tasks and outcomes; different school based or real world learning tasks and outcomes require the use of different skills, aptitudes, and preferences; these general abilities or preferences affect the student’s ability to accomplish different learning outcomes; that is, one’s learning aptitude interacts with the accomplishment of learning tasks and outcomes.

These differences show that every individual has his/her own learning style. And Jonassen and Grabowski (1993) mention that learning styles consists of the learner’s preferences in different educational and instructional activities. These are the general tendencies which are preferred in processing data in different ways.

As Keefe (1979, as cited in Kazu, 2009) says learning styles are cognitive, affective and psychological characteristics that learners use as constant determinants to some extent in their perception, interaction and reaction styles. The other definition said by Kolb (1984) as differences in learning ways are based on the four kinds of learning processes in relation to each other; active experimentation, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and concrete experience. Dunn and Dunn (1993), as well, define learning style as learning style is a way of getting and processing the knowledge starting with the learners’ dealing with new and difficult information.

Besides, these theoretical principals and approaches mentioned so far, there are some fundamentals which the new elementary school curriculum is based on. These fundamentals are given after the basic principles are presented in the next part.

2.6. Fundamentals of the New Elementary School Curriculum

Curriculum is prepared based on ideas that are the principles of it. According to these basic principles; curriculum (TTKB, 2005a):

1. Considers our Republic, secular and social legal government, independent and democratic society system, integrity of state, operative democracy, democratic rights and equality of opportunities.
2. Gets new generation to comprehend “Atatürk’s Principles and Reforms” and the importance of them in national presence and social development.
3. Accepts students as a social entity and due to this; it accepts students are affected from their families, schools and environment. In the light of this, curriculum should be appropriate to students’ environment, it works a guide in adapting students to the working and living conditions of their environments.
4. Has a crucial role in increasing the social values such as, humility, dignity, understanding, fairness, honesty, entrepreneurship, optimism, patience, loyalty, simplicity, compassion, tolerance, thrift, trust and responsibility conscious in students.
5. Is appropriate to Turkish society’s national and at the same time moral values, such as peaceableness, sacrifice, charity, hospitality, compassion, keen to dignity and freedom, patriotism, valor, etc. and it regulates to increase the social sensitivity.
6. Gives importance to awareness for positive change. Students are prepared for negative influences due to different changes, and learn how to adapt themselves to these changes. It also helps students to learn about skills related with risk control and leads students to take risks if they need.

After these basic principles of the new elementary school curriculum are explained by TTKB, the new elementary school curriculum is based on our countries’ social, individual, economical, historical and cultural fundamentals (TTKB, 2005a). These are covered in the next parts, respectively.

2.6.1. Social Fundamentals

Children are social individuals; they are affected from their environment, family, friends, and other people around them. Curriculum tries to adapt students to their environment by giving emphasis on values, including social norms (Koç, Işıksal and Bulut, 2007). The new elementary school curriculum is based on these

principles for helping students to adapt themselves to their environment (TTKB, 2005a):

1. Curriculum aims students' psychological, moral, social and cultural developments in their own customs.
2. Curriculum encourages students to learn about their own responsibilities and rights and to be compatible with their environments.
3. Curriculum encourages students to care about social problems.
4. Curriculum considers handicapped and gifted students' problems.
5. Curriculum accepts that democracy necessitates mutual responsibilities between individuals and also individuals accept have both rights and responsibilities in democracy.
6. Curriculum encourages human rights awareness in students.
7. Curriculum strives for personality development education.
8. Curriculum considers sport as a tool for socialization.

As understood from the principles above, main conception of social fundamental is that children are social individuals, so they are affected from their parents, school, and environment. Therefore, curriculum is prepared for helping children to adapt themselves to their environments.

2.6.2. Individual Fundamentals

Curriculum provides individuals to create solutions to academic and real life problems; by this way students will have chance to develop appropriate solutions to their problems (Koç, Işıksal and Bulut, 2007). Individual fundamentals of the new elementary school curriculum are (TTKB, 2005a):

1. Curriculum accepts individual differences of students.
2. Curriculum is appropriate to increase students' personal well-being and success pleasure.
3. Curriculum is a guide to students for their prospective life.
4. Curriculum is sensitive to increase necessary qualities in today's individuals.

5. Curriculum notices students' physical and psychological well-being.
6. Curriculum considers "learning how to learn" issues in individuals.
7. Curriculum is sensitive to the importance of knowledge and different learning styles.
8. Curriculum prepares students to trust individuals and provides this as a life style.

In short, individual fundamental considers the needs of children in their prospective lives, so curriculum takes steps for prospective needs of children.

2.6.3. Economic Fundamentals

There is a need to help students to know the importance of economical and financial issues in a national and global world; in this curriculum there are learning experiences provided students to adapt themselves changing world in terms of these issues (Koç, Işıksal and Bulut, 2007). Basic principles about the new elementary school curriculum are (TTKB, 2005a):

1. Curriculum considers actualization of sustainable economic development.
2. Curriculum considers local economic differences.
3. Curriculum makes provisions about necessary educated human beings needed for economy.
4. Curriculum leads students to be entrepreneurs.
5. Curriculum considers being production focused.

Economical fundamentals are used for preparing children to both their countries and global world, curriculum provide learning experiences children to understand economical conditions of rapidly changing world.

2.6.4. Historical and Cultural Fundamentals

The new elementary school curriculum also includes issues related Turkish society's culture and history. Basic principles of the new elementary school curriculum's historical and cultural fundamentals are (TTKB, 2005a):

1. Curriculum considers Atatürk Principles and Reforms as basics of the education of individuals.
2. Curriculum has items for increasing and improving historical, cultural and social participation.
3. Curriculum considers students' improvement in their own custom.
4. Curriculum helps students to learn about their history for planning their future.
5. Curriculum helps students to see their own cultural and artistic values for improving their self development and socialization.
6. Curriculum helps students to see their own historical and cultural accumulation a tool to contribute international culture.

And in short historical and cultural fundamentals of curriculum are based on gained experiences from the history and cultural issues, and making deduction from these history and cultural issues.

Besides these fundamentals, there are eight common skills defined in the new elementary school curriculum. These skills are critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, research and inquiry, problem solving, ICT usage, entrepreneurship and right usage of Turkish Language. These are covered in the proceeding part, respectively.

2.7. Common Skills of the New Elementary School Curriculum

Common skills that are the basics of different objectives and activities are defined in the new elementary school curriculum. These skills are:

1. *Critical thinking ability* is an important issue in contemporary education. John Dewey (1933, p.118) defines critical thinking as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends.” According to Nickerson (1987), it is the ability to be reasonable, reflexive, responsible and skillful thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do.
2. *Creative thinking ability* is the ability to give many ideas for solving a problem, or possible answers to it. Treffinger and Nassab (2000, p.14) defined creative

thinking as “generating meaningful new connections, searching for many possibilities, varied possibilities, unusual possibilities, or expanded and detailed possibilities.”

3. *Communication ability* is both the verbal ability to speak, listen, read, write, etc. and body languages (TTKB, 2005a).

4. *Research and inquiry ability* is the ability to ask right and meaningful questions, notice and comprehend problem, plan a research, make estimations about results, consider possible problems, test result and improve new ideas (TTKB, 2005a).

5. *Problem solving ability* is the ability about cognitive processing directed at achieving a goal when no solution method is obvious to the problem solver (Lovett, 2002; Mayer, 1992 as cited in Mayer and Wittrock, 2006).

6. *Ability to use ICT* is about researching, finding, processing, presenting and evaluating information through ICT (TTKB, 2005a).

7. *Entrepreneurship* is the ability about the pursuit of opportunities beyond the resources you currently control (Stevenson, 2000). It is about growth, creativity and innovation.

8. *Right usage of Turkish language* is another common skill that is considered in the new elementary school curriculum. This ability is about usage of Turkish language with its right rules; express their feelings, thoughts, dreams and needs in a right way.

In the next parts, vision, learning areas and general goals of compulsory courses in the new elementary school curriculum are presented briefly.

2.8. Presentation of Structure of Courses (Grade 1 - 5)

In this part, compulsory courses which are Turkish Language, Life Sciences, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Science and Technology, English, Visual Arts, Music, Physical Education, Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge and Traffic Safety Curricula’s vision, general goals and learning areas are covered briefly.

a. Turkish Language Curriculum (Grade 1 - 5)

Various cognitive and basic skills like understanding, sorting, classification, inquiry, relating, criticizing, estimation, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, research, exploration, interpretation, self expression, communication ability, collaborative working, discussion, problem solving, entrepreneurship, etc. abilities in today's world. These abilities are gained through right and effective usage of language.

Structure of the Turkish Language Curriculum is composed of general goals, basic skills, learning areas, objectives and different activities. Turkish Language Curriculum aims in prospective students to use Turkish Language right and effectively, express themselves, communicate, work collaboratively, and be entrepreneur and problem solver, think, understand, research, survey, criticize, and interpret scientifically, know their rights and responsibilities, be compatible with their environment, and sensitive to conditioning, enjoy reading and learning, use ICT, be productive society who direct future.

General goals of this curriculum which are appropriate with Turkish National Education general goals and basic principles are as follows (TTKB, 2005a):

1. To improve students' skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, visual reading and visual presentation.
2. To enjoy Turkish Language, use Turkish in right and effective way.
3. To improve cognitive skills, like understanding, ordering, classification, questioning, making connection, criticizing, making estimation, analyzing-synthesizing and evaluation.
4. To increase the word repertoire by improving thinking skills in the texts.
5. To improve the basic skills, like scientific, constructive, critical and creative thinking skills, self expression, communication, collaborative working, problem solving and entrepreneurship.
6. To improve skills, like searching information, discover information, and interpreting it through construction in mind.
7. To improve skills, like accessing information, use this information and produce it.
8. To improve the usage of ICT and learning skills through making meaning in texts.

9. To improve skills related with understanding the message tried to be given media.
10. To improve learners in personal, social, cultural, economical and politic ways.
11. To express students to give importance to national, moral, ethical, historical, cultural, social, aesthetic and artistic values; strengthen national emotion and thoughts.
12. To introduce Turkish and world culture through written and verbal products.
13. To help students to gain reading and writing habit.

Besides these goals and principles, Turkish Language Curriculum (Grade 1 – 5) has five learning areas appropriate with general goals and basic skills; these are “Listening,” “Speaking,” “Reading,” “Writing,” and “Visual Reading and Presentation.” Grammar topics are not a separate learning area in the curriculum; instead, it is embedded five basic learning areas.

b. Life Studies Curriculum (Grade 1 - 3)

Life Sciences Curriculum is prepared for making students to learn about themselves, their society and the world and it was also in 1924, 1936, 1948, 1968, 1998 and 2005 elementary school curricula prepared. 2005 life sciences curriculum aims students to enjoy learning, peace with themselves, society and environment, know themselves, nation, country, environment and improve them, have basic skills that will be necessary in their real life, adapt themselves to dynamic world and bring up happy individuals (TTKB, 2005a).

Common skills that are wanted to be gained by students through interdisciplinary approach are critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, research and inquiry, problem solving, usage of ICT, entrepreneurship and right, effective usage of Turkish. And special skills that are wanted to be given through Life Sciences Curriculum are effective usage of resources (time, money, and materials), being conscious consumer, environment consciousness and effective usage of environmental resources, planning and production, security and ensuring protection (protection from natural disasters, obeying traffic rules, saying “no,” protecting

health), self management (behave ethically, entertainment, learning how to learn, determining goals, knowing themselves, management of emotion, planning career, responsibility, place and time perception), participation, sharing, collaboration and group work (leadership, respect to differences, sharing), knowing basic scientific concepts (change, interaction, cause and effect, similarity/differences, mutual dependence, continuity, conservation), knowing basic concepts related with themes (TTKB, 2005a).

There are three main learning areas embraced in Life Sciences Curriculum; “individual,” “society” and “environment.” Due to thematic education approach, there are three themes which include these three learning areas; “My School Excitement,” “My Unique Home” and “Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow.”

c. Social Sciences Curriculum (Grade 4 - 5)

Social Sciences Curriculum is constituted with understanding of Collective Education System (Toplu Tedris Sistemi); it has composed of history, geography, economy, sociology, anthropology, psychology, law, philosophy, political science, citizenship education, etc. Social Sciences Curriculum gave importance to Barr, Barth, and Shermis’ three historical traditions of social sciences practices (as cited in Kiroğlu et. al, 2006). These three historical traditions are social sciences taught as citizen transmission, social sciences taught as social science and social sciences taught as reflective inquiry or thinking (Sim and Print, 2005).

Social Sciences Curriculum’s vision is to bring up individuals who have information, skills and values that are necessary for this era, internalize Atatürk’s principles and reforms, use concepts and methods that are related with social sciences, efficient, productive, know and apply their own responsibilities and rights, are happy.

Social Sciences Curriculum principles are to accept every student as a unique individual, to be sensitive to the qualifications those are necessary in students’ prospective lives, to give importance to learn how to learn through improving information, concept, value and skills, to stimulate students in thinking, asking

questions and exchanging views, to bring up students in healthy and happy way especially in physical and emotional aspects, to internalize international values with consideration of national identity in the center, to enhance students in psychological, moral, social and cultural from the framework of their own traditions, to bring up individuals who give importance to their rights and apply their responsibilities, to be sensitive to societal problems, to give students chance to use their own experiences in their learning process and interact with their environments, to use different methods and techniques in teaching-learning process for reaching every student (Kiroğlu, et. al, 2006).

Social Sciences Curriculum has eight learning areas; “Individual and Identity,” “Culture and Heritage,” “Human Beings, Places and Environment,” “Time, Continuity and Change,” “Production, Distribution and Consumption,” “Science, Technology and Society,” “Groups, Institutions and Social Organizations,” “Power, Management and Society” and “Global Connections.”

d. Mathematics Curriculum (Grade 1 - 5)

There is an increased recognition of the importance of mathematics. Many science and technology related jobs need more sophisticated mathematical skills in this global world. And mathematics helps individuals to understand the world and social interactions around them. Mathematics Curriculum aims individuals to use mathematics in their real lives, solve problems, share their solutions and thoughts with others, and enjoy learning mathematics. Curriculum is prepared in accordance with the principle that “*every child can learn mathematics*” (TTKB, 2005a).

General goals of the Mathematics curriculum are to comprehend mathematical concepts and systems; to relate them in real life and other learning areas, to gain necessary mathematical information and skills that will be needed in mathematics and other areas, to make logical induction and deduction, to express their own mathematical thoughts and reasoning in mathematical problem solving process, to use mathematical terminology in a right way in expressing their mathematical thoughts, to use effectively their estimation skill and transact in mind skill, to

improve problem solving skills and use them in their real life, to constitute models and relate them with verbal and mathematical expressions, to constitute positive attitude towards mathematics and increase students' self reliance, to appreciate the power of mathematics and its relationship net, to improve enlightened interest, to comprehend the historical development of mathematics, its role and value in human beings' thought and its usage in other fields, to improve being systematic, careful, patient and responsible, to improve research skills, producing knowledge and usage of it, to establish relationship between mathematics and art and improve aesthetic emotions (TTKB, 2005a).

Learning areas determined are “Numbers,” “Geometry,” “Measurement” and “Data.” Mathematics Curriculum gives importance to these basic skills; Problem solving, communication, association and reasoning.

e. Science and Technology Curriculum (Grade 4 - 5)

Science and Technology Curriculum is based on seven understandings and starting points; less knowledge is essence, science and technology literacy, constructive approach, alternative assessment and evaluation methods, appropriateness to developmental levels and individual differences, spiral curriculum and interdisciplinary approach.

Science and Technology Curriculum aims students, whatever their individual differences, should improve searching ability, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills; be life long learners and gain skills, attitudes, values, understanding, and knowledge related with science and be science literate.

General goals of the Science and Technology Curriculum are to learn and understand natural world, to live the excitement of this world, to encourage students to improve interest emotion about scientific and technological developments in different grade levels, to understand nature of science and technology; the interaction between science, technology, society, environment, to gain construction of new knowledge skill through research, reading and discussion, to constitute background knowledge, experience and interest about science and technology

related jobs, to learn how to learn, through this way they can keep up with the changes in jobs, to use science and technology in problem solving and learning new knowledge in unexpected situations, to use appropriate scientific processes and principles in personal decision making, to notice, take responsibility and give conscious decisions in social, economical, ethic, personal health, environmental problems which are related with science and technology, to have scientific values like, eager to know and understand, interrogation, appreciating to nature, logic and thinking the results of the actions; to behave appropriately during the interaction between society and environment, to increase their economical productivity in their professional lives through knowledge, understanding and skills usage (TTKB, 2005a).

Science and Technology Curriculum has four major learning areas; “Living Beings and Life,” “Matter and Change,” “Physical Actions” and “World and Universe,” but for making students science literate “Relationship between Science-Technology-Society-Environment,” “Skills in Scientific Process” and “Attitudes and Values” learning areas’ objectives are embedded in major learning areas.

f. English Language Curriculum (Grade 4 - 5)

Multilingualism is an important issue in today’s world, especially the dominance of English language has started with industrialization and modernization in the 18th and 19th centuries. Now, English is the official working language of the United States and NATO.

Goals of English Language Curriculum (Grade 4 - 5) are; having a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type; having a basic vocabulary repertoire of isolated words and phrases related to particular concrete situations; showing only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire; pronouncing a very limited repertoire of learned words and phrases intelligibly though not without some effort; copying familiar words and short phrases e.g. simple signs or instructions, names of everyday objects, names of shops and set phrases used regularly; spelling his/her

address, nationality and other personal details; establishing basic social contact by using the simplest everyday polite forms of greetings and farewells, introductions; saying please, thank you, sorry, etc; managing very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions; articulating less familiar words, and repairing communication (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

English Language Curriculum has four learning areas; “Listening,” “Reading,” “Writing” and “Speaking.”

g. Visual Arts Curriculum (Grade 1 - 5)

Visual Arts Curriculum aims students to internalize society’s today and future life styles, to improve perception and interpretation of the world, sensitive to social developments and nature, to respond to the rapid changes in communication and interaction opportunities and their effects to individuals and society, to have interrogation consciousness, to find solutions to negative effects of scientific and technological changes, to express themselves and have positive qualifications, and to realize the value of arts in society and individuals and form a society with these conscious individuals.

General goals of Visual Arts Curriculum are classified in four groups; “Individual and Social Goals,” “Perceptual Goals,” “Aesthetic Goals” and “Technique Goals.”

Individual and Social Goals are to have sensitivity in observation of nature, to improve students in analysis and synthesis skills, and have a critical point of view, to notice students’ abilities; to have and improve their abilities, to express themselves through visual models, to have a consciousness about their interests in past and construction of future, and nourish their interests through different resources (museum, gallery, historical monuments, etc.), to improve creative behaviors which can be used different fields, to recognize national and international arts and artists, to improve the consciousness about recognizing and understanding national and international values, to have pleasure and feeling of honored from the arts remained from past, to have consciousness about collaboration, sharing, taking responsibility, respecting their own works and others’ works, and have sensitivity,

to protect students' mental health, express their inner world, show emotional reactions, respect their physical body and to improve consciousness about these issues, to earn interrogation consciousness about mind, emotions and pleasure (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

Perceptual Goals are to improve students' perceptual retention and imagination, to enable students to transform their perceptual retention to their subjective artistic expression, to improve students in using their retentions in other fields, to help students in transforming their knowledge and retention, to help students in finding unique solutions to new situations (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

Aesthetic Goals are to help students to comprehend the value of art and artistic monuments, to help students in having pleasure, feeling honored and protecting consciousness about artistic monuments of nature, environment and past, to help students in having affection to arts and reflecting this affection every part of their lives; showing this as a behavior, to have artistic evaluation retention to nature and human made things, to enable students to express themselves and utilize from this behavior.

Technique Goals are to help students to learn how to use different materials in transforming visual arts and enable students' development, to make students understand different techniques and appreciate these differences, to make students see the wealth of different techniques in expression, to help students find different techniques other than taught and increase their courage, to help students find appropriate materials to their aims, to encourage students in finding technical solutions to problems they confront (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

Visual Arts Curriculum has three main learning areas; "Modeling in Visual Arts," "Visual Arts Culture" and "Museum Consciousness."

h. Music Curriculum (Grade 1 - 5)

Music Curriculum aims students to be at peace with themselves and their environment, to recognize national and international cultures, to love their country

and nation, to be sensitive to situations, changes and developments in their environments, to be open to different types of fine arts, and to be happy, have a distinctive personality and self confidence (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

Music Curriculum's goals appropriate with Turkish National Education' goals are to improve aesthetic aspect of student through music, to provide opportunities to students in expressing their emotions, thoughts and experiences through music, to improve students' creativity and abilities through music, to recognize local, regional, national and international music culture, to contribute students' personality and self confidence development, to improve students' cognitive skills through music, to improve students' individual and social interaction through music, to attend qualified listening, singing and playing both individual and collective activities, to improve students' musical perception and knowledge, to use Turkish right and effective way, to sing appropriately both Turkish National Anthem and other anthems, to improve affection, sharing and responsibility emotions through music, to have musical culture and retention which contribute national unity, integrity and integrity with world, to comprehend the development of Turkish music from point of Atatürk's view, have affection to Atatürk's principles and reforms and be cultivated individuals (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

Music Curriculum has four main learning areas; "Listening-Singing-Playing," "Musical Perception and Enlightenment," "Musical Creativity" and "Musical Culture."

i. Physical Education Curriculum (Grade 1 - 5)

Physical Education Curriculum aims students to show proficiency in motion patterns and skills for contributing to different physical activities, to show comprehension about concepts, principles, rules, strategy and tactics in learning and application of physical activities, to contribute physical activities for reinforcing their health, to contribute physical activities regularly, to exhibit responsible personal and social behaviors in physical activities (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

Physical Education Curriculum has two main learning areas; “Movement Knowledge and Skills” and “Active Participation and Healthy Life.”

j. Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge Curriculum (Grade 4 - 5)

Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge Curriculum goals are explained in five aspects; individual, social, moral, cultural and international.

Individual aspects are to answer basic religious and moral questions, to be conscious about freedom of conviction and life, to realize religious believes and worships without others’ exploitation, to comprehend right usage of religious concepts, to distinguish religious information and superstitious believes, to comprehend the intimacy and affection dimensions of religion and its importance to human beings, to help students comprehend both Islam and other religions through recognizing their main resources, to distinguish behaviors based on religious orders and social expectations and habits, to recognize faith, worship and moral principals of Islam, to comprehend that Islam is in harmony with mind and science, to comprehend that healthy mind is a must in religious responsibility; religion encourages learning scientific knowledge, to be happy with their own religious believes (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

Social aspects are to recognize religious and moral behaviors in their society, to recognize that different religious believes and life styles is a social fact, to approach other believes and life styles in respectful way, to distinguish superstition believes in social lives, to have a consciousness about physical and social environment (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

Moral aspects are to know moral values and to have respect to these values, to internalize moral values, to realize the positive aspects of believes and worships (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

Cultural aspects are to comprehend that religion is an important element in formation of culture, to recognize the religion effects on other cultural issues, to approach differences in generations about religious believes in right way, to

evaluate the elements which are effective in Turkish accepting Islam, to comprehend that religious and national festivals are important in integration of nation (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

International aspects are to contribute international values with their own religious knowledge and consciousness, to approach other people with different religious believes in respectful way, to comprehend overlapping of international human values and Islam's human values (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006).

There are six learning areas defined in Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge Curriculum; "Belief," "Worship," "Prophet Mohammed," "Quran and Its Interpretation," "Morality" and "Religion and Culture."

k. Traffic Safety Curriculum (Grade 4 - 5)

General goals of Traffic Safety Curriculum are to avoid danger in traffic and not cause any danger, to help students to understand what is traffic, to constitute consciousness about traffic safety in students, to constitute positive values about traffic in students, to improve sensitivity about traffic rules and increase the number of sensitive individuals, to constitute sensitivity of parents about traffic rules through students (Kıroğlu, et. al, 2006). General themes of this curriculum are "pedestrian," "passenger" and "driver."

In addition to principles and approaches behind the new elementary school curriculum, fundamentals and common skills defined for it and presentation of some details of compulsory courses, there are responsibilities defined for stakeholders of the curriculum. These are covered in the next parts.

2.9. Responsibilities Defined for Stakeholders

There are different responsibilities defined for teachers, inspectors, parents and school principals in the new elementary school curriculum. These are given in the next parts.

2.9.1. Teachers' Responsibilities

In the new elementary school curriculum, teachers are required to have strong subject matter knowledge and guide the teaching learning process. This shows that teachers' work load is increased with the current curriculum contrary to the common belief. As Brooks and Brooks (1993) define teachers in constructivist class as teachers generally behave in an interactive manner mediating the environment for students and teachers seek the student's point of view in order to understand student learning for use in subsequent conceptions. However, in traditional classroom according to Brooks and Brooks (1993) teachers generally behave in a didactic manner, disseminating information to students and teachers seek the correct answers to validate student lessons. According to Dolmans, Wolfhagen, Schmidt and Van der Vleuten (1994 as cited in Vighnarajah, Su Luan and Abu Bakar, 2008) teachers' performance towards their teaching assumes an important influence on the quantity of educational program, and eventually on the competence of graduates.

There are responsibilities defined for teachers in the new elementary school curriculum as (TTKB, 2005b):

1. Having background knowledge about curriculum and finding a solution resulted from current curriculum.
2. Constituting an archive from the materials used in activities.
3. Defining students' learning needs.
4. Informing students about study methods.
5. Constituting reading lists for students and developing these lists in time.
6. Being in communication and collaboration with parents.
7. Constituting a file for each student's personal information.
8. Updating their knowledge about new approaches in education.
9. Giving seminars to parents about students' progress.
10. Considering students' individual differences in preparing in class activities.

As seen from the new responsibilities of teachers, the new elementary school curriculum considers teachers' role as facilitating the students' learning. Facilitating

role of teachers can be realized from the window of these responsibilities through planning the learning, implementing the plan, assessing students and evaluating the process with strong theoretical knowledge, and collaboration and communication with other stakeholders like parents.

2.9.2. Inspectors' Responsibilities

It is anticipated from contemporary supervision understanding to advance goals, provide coordination and control, motivate, problem solving, enhance personnel and evaluation responsibilities (Sağlamer, 1985). At the same time, Waite (1995, as cited in Beycioğlu and Dönmez, 2009) says that educational supervision has three functions: guidance, training and instruction.

There are responsibilities defined for inspectors in the new elementary school curriculum as (TTKB, 2005b):

1. Having enough and appropriate knowledge about curriculum.
2. Revising their knowledge about new approaches in education.
3. Sharing knowledge about activities and seminars within schools.
4. Preparing seminars for sharing their knowledge and their experiences.
5. Guiding teachers in implementation of curriculum.
6. Benefitting from effective communication skills.
7. Sharing and guiding teachers about current and alternative assessment and evaluation methods.
8. Guiding teachers about teaching methods and strategies.

These responsibilities defined in the curriculum are appropriate to contemporary supervision understanding mentioned above, and besides it enlarges responsibilities about curriculum.

2.9.3. Parents' Responsibilities

Parents' role is vital in students' learning and development process; they are children's first and enduring teachers. There may be barriers to parents' involvement to their children's education (Collins, Cooper and Whitmore, 1995); differing ideas among parents and teachers on what constitutes involvement, a less than welcoming atmosphere toward visitors in schools and classrooms, negative or neutral communication from schools, insufficient training for teachers on how to reach out both mothers and fathers, lack of parental education and parenting skills, time pressures, job pressures and language barriers.

The new elementary school curriculum defined responsibilities for parents as to overcome these barriers (TTKB, 2005b) through:

1. Being knowledgeable about curriculum.
2. Helping teachers in defining students' needs.
3. Helping students in putting practice what they have learnt in schools to real life.
4. Helping teachers in preparation of activities.
5. Being in collaboration with teachers and school.
6. Participating seminars for parents realized in school.

These responsibilities indicate the parents' crucial role in supporting children's learning and successful implementation of the new elementary school curriculum briefly.

2.9.4. School Principals' Responsibilities

As Mintzberg (1990) says that the principals' effectiveness is significantly influenced by their insight into their work. Their performance depends on how well they understand and respond to the pressures and dilemmas of the job. Principals have responsibility in monitoring the curriculum implementation process as instructional leaders. There are also responsibilities of school principals defined as (TTKB, 2005b):

1. Having background knowledge about curriculum and finding a solution resulted from current curriculum.
2. Preparing physical environment by providing necessary materials for curriculum implementation.
3. Providing coordination between teachers.
4. Providing arrangement of seminars for increasing teachers' professional development, orienting teachers to participate these seminars.
5. Enabling teachers to discover knowledge, their skills and creativity.
6. Arranging seminars for parents.

Marsh (2004) summarizes these like responsibilities defined in the new elementary school curriculum as teachers expect their school principals to be instructional leaders and supporters of curriculum initiatives and to be visible and active around the school buildings.

Up to this point, elementary school curriculum practices in Turkish Republic between 1923 and 2009 and theoretical background behind the new elementary school curriculum are tried to be presented comprehensively. In the proceeding part, some of the studies or researches realized about the new elementary school curriculum are discussed.

2.10. Studies Realized about the New Elementary School Curriculum

There are many studies realized about the new elementary school curriculum (Grade 1 – 5) in the recent literature, and there are also many master thesis and dissertations about this curriculum. Some of these studies are shared in the next paragraphs.

There is a variety of topics investigated about the new elementary school curriculum. The issues about the change in the curriculum took attention of researchers, and change in the elementary school curriculum was studied based on different dimensions, like teachers' role in curriculum development process, psychological effects of change on teachers, etc. For instance, Saracaloğlu, Yılmaz, Çengel, Çöğmen, Aldan Karademir, and Kanmaz's study (2010) realized in Denizli

Province indicated that elementary school teachers' views were not taken into account during curriculum development and evaluation process, however, teachers believed in the active role of teachers during this process. In addition, Altun and Şahin (2009) studied the psychological effects of curriculum change on class teachers and they found that class teachers did not get any support to overcome problems related with psychological status of teachers. Furthermore, according to Korkmaz's study (2006) first graders teachers had perceived the change in curriculum as positive, but there were some drawbacks mentioned by teachers like; crowded classrooms, parents' unconsciousness about the curriculum, and hard to apply many forms during assessment and evaluation process.

Along with the change in the elementary school curriculum, some researchers chose to study the issues related with the implementation of the new elementary school curriculum. Such as, Adıgüzel (2009) tried to determine the problems lived by classroom teachers based on each dimension of the curriculum, and investigated both classroom teachers and school principals' views. As a result of Adıgüzel's study, he found that least problems were occurred in objectives, content, and assessment and evaluation dimensions, besides, there were still more problems about the instructional process dimension. In another study, Birgin and Baki (2009) investigated only assessment and evaluation dimension of the curriculum, and this study showed that teachers were not proficient in performance, and assessment and evaluation methods. In addition, Yapıcı and Leblebiciler's study (2007) also indicated that novice teachers had more positive views with respect to implementation of curriculum. Besides, lack of physical infrastructure, labs and libraries, computer and other technologies, and lastly insufficient in-service training provided for teachers were biggest barriers for the villages for successful implementation of the new curriculum. Another study, which was carried out by Gömleksiz (2007), also showed that there were not significant differences found between the opinions of teachers on learning environment, knowing, adopting and implementing the curriculum and on the whole curriculum in terms of class and education levels. Subaşı's thesis (2006) also indicated that most of the teachers had problems about the crowded classrooms and lack of equipments.

There are studies which chose to investigate individual course curriculum like in Birgin, Tutak, and Türkdoğan's study (2009), Aydın's thesis (2007), and Şahin's study (2007). For instance, Birgin, Tutak and Türkdoğan (2009) carried out a study for determining elementary school teachers' views about the new elementary school mathematics curriculum, and the results indicated that in-service trainings were insufficient in terms of duration, organizations, model activities and sufficient experiences. Aydın's thesis (2007), on the other hand, was realized for evaluating the 4th and 5th grade new social science curriculum from the window of social science teachers, and results of this study showed that students were more active while implementation of this curriculum. However, crowded classrooms and insufficient materials in schools were problems during implementation of the curriculum. In addition to these studies, Şahin (2007) made a research about new Turkish Language Curriculum (Grade 1 - 5), and the results indicated that this new curriculum and performance indicators depending on teachers' perspectives and standards were concurrent to the criteria of the curriculum set in literature. Furthermore, Alp (2007) examined 4th grade new science and technology elementary school curriculum based on objective, content, instructional process, and assessment and evaluation dimensions, and as a result, he found that teachers had positive attitudes towards content, the level of attainment of objectives and instructional process, on the other hand, they had negative attitudes towards instructional process, and assessment and evaluation dimensions.

Constructivism approach, that the new elementary school curriculum is mainly based on, was also investigated by some researchers like Sert (2008) and Senger (2007). In Sert's study, she tried to determine the congruency between 5th grade Turkish Language, Mathematics, English Language, and Science and Technology courses' curriculum, and the principles and standards of constructivist approach. The results of this study showed that the curriculum was concurrent with the principles of constructivist approach. In addition to Sert's study, Senger thesis was also about the constructivist approach and teachers' views related to the new elementary school curriculum which is mainly based on constructivist approach. Results of her thesis also showed that teachers were not knowledgeable about the principles of constructivist curriculum; during the preparation of the new

curriculum regional differences were disregarded; and teachers were not knowledgeable about assessment and evaluation methods.

More comprehensive studies were realized by Professors Committee in Curriculum and Instruction and ERG based on document analysis. The results of the report prepared by Professors Committee in Curriculum and Instruction Field in 2005 in Eskişehir were as follows:

1. Curriculum reforms should be according to that country's philosophy, needs and life styles.
2. Previous curriculum reforms do not consider during the preparation of new elementary school curriculum development process.
3. Scientific feedbacks of previous curriculum studies are not considered during the preparation of new elementary school curriculum development process.
4. It is not true to base the curriculum only one educational approach.
5. Instead of adaptation of other countries' curricula, it would be better to improve curriculum in use during the preparation of new elementary school curriculum development process.
6. Preparation curriculum in a short time inhibits to work in the total system during the preparation of the new elementary school curriculum development process.
7. Pilot study is not enough with respect to its time and coverage; also the results are not evaluated objectively.
8. Teachers are not given enough in-service training about the curriculum.
9. Experts in related fields should be collaborated for solving problems realized during curriculum development and implementation process.

ERG also presented a report named as Scrutiny and Evaluation of New Elementary School Curriculum in May 2005. This report was developed according to document analysis method and done by experts in Turkish, Mathematics, Life Sciences, Social Sciences and Science and Technology fields. According to this report, with respect to previous curriculum new elementary school curriculum has changed:

1. Students' role (more active)
2. Teachers' role (facilitator)

3. Concepts, like “objective, etc.”
4. Thematic approach in content organization, with respect to them learning areas are defined
5. Flexible activities according to individual differences and environmental conditions
6. More importance to critical and creative thinking, communication, problem solving, making research, decision making, increased usage of information and communication technology, entrepreneurship, individual and social values, etc. skills
7. Increased usage of materials
8. In developing of activities, multiple intelligence theory was utilized
9. Various assessment and evaluation methods and process evaluation was addressed (ERG, 2005)

The report prepared by Professors Committee in Curriculum and Instruction Field and Education Reform Initiative Report are theoretical in nature, because they are mostly based on document analysis of experts in related fields.

When these researches, theses and dissertations are taken into account, it can easily be seen that there are various types of studies realized in the literature. There are studies about individual courses’ curricula, problems lived by teachers and what the new elementary school curriculum change takes with itself. However, there is not any study encountered which considers the strengths and weaknesses the class teachers face with new elementary school curriculum and its implementation in Kars, also examines the students’ educational needs and Kars’ local characteristics from the perspectives of class teachers and teacher educators, and lastly partial decentralization of elementary school curriculum a useful tool for meeting local and educational needs of students from the perspectives of teacher educators.

2.11. Summary

In this chapter, current literature about curriculum and its dimensions; elementary school curriculum practices in Turkey between 1923 and 2009; presentation of the new elementary school curriculum; basic principles and approaches behind it; presentation of compulsory courses, fundamentals and common skills of the new

elementary school curriculum; presentation of structure of compulsory courses; and responsibilities defined for the stakeholders of the new elementary school curriculum are presented. Lastly, the chapter ends with the some of the studies realized about the new elementary school curriculum. As seen from the current literature, change in the curriculum is an inevitable process, however, there are some issues that are not still met with the new elementary school curriculum like, crowded classrooms (Aydın, 2007; Korkmaz, 2006; Subaşı, 2006), lack of equipments in schools (Aydın, 2007; Subaşı, 2006; Yapıcı and Leblebiciler, 2007;), problems related with assessment and evaluation process (Birgin and Baki, 2009; Korkmaz, 2006; Senger, 2007), parents' unconsciousness about the new curriculum (Korkmaz, 2006), etc.

This thesis, on the other hand, is designed to reveal classroom teachers' perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers face with the new elementary school curriculum and its implementation in Kars Province, and also examines the students' educational needs and classroom teachers' needs from the window of Kars' local characteristics; teacher educators' perceptions about strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers face with regard to implementation of the new elementary school curriculum, and classroom teachers' needs about the new elementary school curriculum.

In the next chapter, methodology applied during this study is tried to be presented.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter presents design of the study, research questions, participants, data collection instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures and limitations of the study, respectively.

3.1. Design of the Study

The main purposes of this study are to gather data in different dimensions; the strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers face with the new elementary school curriculum (Grade 1 - 5) and its implementation in Kars Province, and also examines the students' educational needs and classroom teachers' needs under Kars' local characteristics from the perspectives of classroom teachers; teacher educators' perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers face while implementation of the curriculum, and classroom teachers' needs about the curriculum.

In order to reach these purposes, a cross sectional survey method was used. A survey method aims at describing situations that happened in the past or situations that happen currently as they are (Karasar, 2009). Survey method describes and interprets "*what is*" question. Furthermore, a cross sectional survey was utilized "to collect information from the sample that has been drawn from a predetermined population at just one point in time" (Frankel and Wallen, 2006, p.398). In this

study due to limited teacher population size all urban classroom teachers were included in the study.

The data gathered through this study was primarily qualitative in nature. Data were collected through a survey questionnaire that contained open ended questions (prepared for classroom teachers) and a semi structured interview form (prepared for teacher educators). In a survey questionnaire with open ended questions, the researcher has a chance to have richer data and deeper insight into specific issues (Bowditch and Buono, 1982). With semi-structured interview technique, the interviewer is free to probe and explore within predetermined inquiry areas (Hoepfl, 1997). Moreover, Isaac (1995) indicates that semi-structured interview technique enables the researcher to ask a core group of structured questions that seek to identify underlying factors or relationships which are too complex or elusive to encompass in more straightforward questions.

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.17) define the qualitative research as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification.” And by this way, qualitative methods permit the evaluator to study selected issues, cases, or events in depth and in detail (Patton, 1987). In qualitative methods mostly there are three types of data collected; “*data related with environment*,” “*data related with process*” and “*data related with perceptions*” (LeCompte and Goetz, 1984). In this study data related with perceptions were gathered and these were taken through a survey questionnaire containing open ended questions and a semi structured interview form.

According to Creswell (2009), the characteristics of qualitative research are; (1) *natural setting*, (2) *researcher as key instrument*, (3) *multiple sources of data*, (4) *inductive data analysis*, (5) *participants' meanings*, (6) *emergent design*, (7) *theoretical lens*, (8) *interpretive* and (9) *holistic account*. When these characteristics of qualitative research are considered, this study encompasses some of them as:

The direct source of data gathered throughout this study was the natural setting, where all urban elementary schools in Kars were accessible and the researcher was a participant of the Kafkas University Faculty of Education, and the researcher had

chance to conduct face-to-face interaction with classroom teacher and teacher educator population during the study. Besides, the researcher was directly involved in the data collection procedure; she applied the questionnaires to classroom teachers and realized semi-structured interviews with teacher educators herself, and she had also chance to make observation in the natural setting. Moreover, she collected data only through survey questionnaires from classroom teachers and semi-structured interviews from teacher educators.

The study was based on current literature, its theoretical framework was based on this, and with the help of inductive data analysis, extra themes also emerged during data analysis process and so the results; that is to say, there was a flexibility of the themes during the research process. Furthermore, the main purpose of both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was to learn about perceptions of classroom teachers and teacher educators, she tried to acquire deeper meaning from the perceptions of participants through engaging the process and building empathy with participants. In addition, due to emergent characteristic of qualitative design, she tried to be flexible in the initial research plan; especially during the data analysis she was tried to be flexible in its themes derived, extra themes were also derived from the subjects' realities and meanings in the data gathered.

As mentioned above, the study was based on the theoretical framework based on the current literature about the new elementary school curriculum. Survey questionnaires with open ended questions and semi-structured interviews were used for data gathering and direct quotations of both classroom teachers and teacher educators were used. Also holistic approach was tried to be applied during data collection and data analysis process for giving the holistic picture rather than just focusing on individual parts of the issue.

When these characteristics of qualitative research mentioned above are considered, this study is appropriate to qualitative research characteristics as natural setting, researcher as key instrument, only two sources of data, inductive data analysis, participants' meanings, emergent design, theoretical lens, interpretive and holistic account defined by Creswell (2009).

3.2. Research Questions

This study is designed to answer the following research questions to reach the desired purposes:

1. What are classroom teachers' perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum (Grade 1 - 5) in relation to objectives, content, instructional methods, resources, and assessment and evaluation dimensions in Kars?
 - 1.1. What are the strengths and weaknesses classroom teachers confront with regard to the new elementary school curriculum in Kars?
 - 1.2. What are the educational needs of elementary school students and classroom teachers about the new elementary school curriculum in Kars?
2. What are the teacher educators' perceptions (Faculty and teaching assistants) about the new elementary school curriculum (Grade 1 – 5) in relation to objectives, content, instructional methods, resources, and assessment and evaluation dimensions in Kars?
 - 2.1. What are teacher educators' perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses classroom teachers confront about the new elementary school curriculum in Kars?
 - 2.2. What are teacher educators' perceptions about the needs of classroom teachers with regard to the new elementary school curriculum in Kars?

3.3. Participants

Target population of this study with regard to classroom teachers in Kars Province (including its districts Arpaçay, Akyaka, Digor, Kağızman, Selim, Susuz, and Sarıkamış) was the ones working in urban regions of Kars and all teacher educators (Teaching assistants / lectures, doctorate research assistants, assistant professors, associate professors and full professors) practicing in Kafkas University Education Faculty in the 2008-2009 academic year.

Classroom Teachers: The study was conducted in urban elementary schools ($N=52$) in Kars Province ($n=23$) and its districts; Akyaka ($n=2$), Arpaçay ($n=3$), Digor ($n=2$), Kağızman ($n=8$), Sarıkamış ($n=9$), Selim ($n=3$) and Susuz ($n=2$). Total size of the target population was 336 according to Kars Directorate of National Education (Data gathered on 12th October 2008). The frequency of classroom teachers working in urban regions of Kars are presented in Table 2 in frequencies with regard to Kars city center and its districts.

Table 2

Size of the Target Population (Classroom Teachers) with Respect to Place of Work

Place of work	N
Kars	143
Akyaka	9
Arpaçay	12
Digor	9
Kağızman	67
Sarıkamış	63
Selim	20
Susuz	13
Total	336

All classroom teachers ($N=336$) in urban schools of Kars were administered the survey questionnaire. Table 3 below presents rate of returned and valid survey questionnaires administered to the target population in frequencies. The return rate is 73.21% with respect to returned survey questionnaires. Among the returned survey questionnaires ($n=246$), only 71.95% ($n=177$) were valid, so the sample was 177 classroom teachers. Some of the returned survey questionnaires ($n=69$) were excluded from the data analysis due to the fact that some participant classroom teachers filled only half or less than half of the survey questionnaires. Among the valid survey questionnaires gathered from participant classroom teachers, 116 of them were from the Kars city center and 61 of them were from Kars districts.

Table 3

*Rate of Returned and Valid Survey Questionnaire with Respect to Place of Work
(Classroom Teachers)*

Place of work	Returned survey questionnaire	Valid survey questionnaire
	n	n
Kars	137	116
Akyaka	6	6
Arpaçay	9	8
Digor	7	5
Kağızman	36	4
Sarıkamış	30	23
Selim	14	11
Susuz	7	4
Total	246	177

Target population, all classroom teachers in urban regions of Kars (including its districts; Susuz, Arpaçay, Akyaka, Digor, Kağızman, Selim and Sarıkamış), was used for survey questionnaire; through this method it is assumed that the researcher can easily find the necessary data sources needed and it is supposed that the participants are more representative of the target population. The procedures the researcher applied were; first obtained data about the number of classroom teachers in Kars Province from the Kars Directorate of National Education, and then she distributed survey questionnaires to all classroom teachers in urban regions of Kars right after she had been given permission for the study by Kars Directorate of National Education.

Teacher Educators: Teacher educators' total size in Kafkas University was 20 according to Kars Kafkas University Education Faculty Secretariat (Data gathered on 12th October 2008). Target population with regard to teacher educators are presented in Table 4 below in frequencies.

Table 4

Size of Target Population (Teacher Educators)

Academic Title	N
Assistant professor	9
Teaching assistant / lecturer	8
Full professor	2
Doctorate research assistant	1
Associate professor	0
Total	20

Snow ball sampling method for teacher educators ($N=20$) in Kafkas University Education Faculty (Ranging from Teaching Assistants to Full Professors) was used for the semi-structured interviews. The reason behind choosing snowball sampling method is that in a relatively small population of people who are likely to be in contact with one another, then, snowball sampling is an effective way to build an exhaustive sampling frame (Bernard, 2000). The procedure applied for selecting a sample for the semi-structured interview from teacher educators (Ranging from teaching assistants to full professors) in Kars Kafkas University Education Faculty was as follows; the researcher firstly made an appointment with a teacher educator who was one of the members of Educational Sciences Department in Kafkas University Faculty of Education and had studies about the new elementary school curriculum and conducted an interview. At the end of the interview, the researcher asked to suggest additional people for interviewing about the same topic with the same semi-structured interview form. By this way, the researcher had interviewed six teacher educators who were suggested based on the following qualities: working in Kafkas University Faculty of Education in 2008-2009 academic year and having studies about the new elementary school curriculum. Finally, interviews terminated when the process generated no new references.

During both application of questionnaires and semi structured interviews, respondents' willingness to take part in the research was given importance. Both classroom teachers and teacher educators participated this study had signed the form which was about their volunteer participation to the study (see Appendix A and B).

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

Two instruments were used in this study; a survey questionnaire with open ended questions for classroom teachers and a semi-structured interview form for teacher educators. Main reason for selecting a survey questionnaire for data gathering is that it enables the researcher to gather data through standardized in a systematic way (Armağan, 1983). And the reasons for choosing semi structured interview form are (Balçı, 2009):

Providing motivation for gathering whole and true answers from resource people and eliminating possible bias resulting from their social willingness and conformity in these people. (p.164)

The preparation of both survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview form are explained in the following part, respectively.

3.4.1. Survey Questionnaire

First data collection instrument was the survey questionnaire. Content of the questions in the survey questionnaire was based on the research about the new elementary school curriculum, researcher's observations and informal interviews with four classroom teachers in Kars city center and one assistant principal in Akyaka (A district of Kars Province). Content of informal interviews was about the implementation of the new elementary school curriculum, their perceptions about strengths and weaknesses during implementation of the new elementary school curriculum, their schools' physical conditions, parents' aspects about education, parents' economic conditions and Kars general social and economic characteristics. Besides those practitioners' based data, the researcher benefitted from existing literature about the new elementary school curriculum. Some of these resources were:

1. Akça, S. (2007). *Evaluation of 5th grade primary school mathematics curriculum with respect to teachers', administrators' and inspectors' opinions*. Unpublished master thesis, Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyon.
2. Alp, M. (2007). *Examining and evaluation of 4th grade science and technology new elementary school curriculum*. Unpublished master thesis, Selçuk University, Konya.
3. Aydın, S. (2007). *Evaluation of 4th and 5th grade elementary school social sciences curriculum according to teachers' views (Trabzon Case)*. Sakarya University, Sakarya.

4. Dođan eken, Y. (2006). *Globalization and education policies in Turkey: A study on new primary school curriculum social science program*. Unpublished master thesis, Ege University, İzmir.
5. Erdal, H. (2007). *The investigation of measurement and evaluation parts in the new elementary school mathematics curriculum (Afyonkarahisar Case)*. Unpublished master thesis, Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyon.
6. Second evaluation report prepared by Education Research and Development Directorate (EARGED, 2005).
7. Senger, H. C. (2007). *The constructive approach and teachers' point of views related to the curriculum according to the constructivist approach (Kars Case)*. Unpublished master thesis, Kafkas University, Kars.
8. Subaşı, R. (2006). Views of teachers on new education program which is in practice since 2005-2006 academic year (İstanbul, Bağcılar Case). Unpublished master thesis, Sakarya University, Sakarya.

At last, survey questionnaire was subjected to three experts' review. This was done for providing the content and face validity of the survey questionnaire. Two experts were in curriculum and instruction department and one of them was in educational administration and planning department. Experts reviewed the survey questionnaires for checking if the content of the survey questionnaire is appropriate to research questions of this study or not. According to the experts' views, necessary changes were realized. These changes were done in the following parts: the introduction of the survey questionnaire was found to be not clear and had ambiguous terms, the length of the questionnaire was too long and responses to some questions were similar. For overcoming these, a new introduction for survey questionnaire was written based on the feedbacks of experts and length of the survey questionnaire was decreased by discarding questions that leded similar responses.

Then, a pilot test was realized with 62 volunteer teachers in eight elementary schools in Kars city center for the internal validity of the questionnaire.

Convenience sampling method was used during this pilot study due to fact that this sampling method provides the researcher practicality and pace (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006) and sample is easy to access and inexpensive to study (Patton, 1990). According to classroom teachers' feedback during the pilot study, all unnecessary, difficult or ambiguous terms were discarded (Peat, Mellis, Williams and Xuan, 2002, p.123).

Final form of survey questionnaire has two sections: (1) Demographic information which has fourteen questions (Place of work "Kars city center or its districts," gender, age, highest degree gained "Pre license, undergraduate, master, doctorate," faculty of graduation "Education Faculty, Faculty of Science and Art, Teacher Training High School, Others," department of graduation, total teaching experience, teaching experience in elementary schools in Kars, teaching experience in their current school, size of their school, size of their class, the physical conditions of their school, if they have in-service training and in what topics, sources of information they benefitted about new elementary school curriculum), (2) Six questions related with classroom teachers' perceptions about implementation of elementary school curriculum in Kars (see Appendix C).

3.4.2. Semi-Structured Interview Form

The second data collection instrument was the semi-structured interview form; through this method, it is assumed that semi-structured interview allows deepening, discriminating and clarifying conceptions and thoughts of the respondents and guarantees the uniformity of the topics across the whole sample (Denscombe, 2007).

A semi-structured interview form for teacher educators in Kars Kafkas University Education Faculty was developed also according to informal interviews with three teacher educators in educational sciences department still practicing in education faculties and literature review findings done by the researcher.

For verifying the validity of the semi-structured interview form; the semi-structured interview form was also subjected to experts' review (LeCompte and Goetz, 1984).

These three experts were also the practicing teacher educators in education faculties and faculty members. According to their feedback, changes were made in the interview form. The changes were realized in the wording of the questions which look ambiguous and not clear, adding extra prompts to some questions and decreasing the number of questions which led similar responses.

Final semi-structured interview form consists of two types of questions which are eight personal background related items (Gender, age, academic title, duration of position title, employment duration at the Kafkas University Education Faculty, if they had been abroad for education purposes “undergraduate study, master study, doctorate study or for research purposes,” major field of study “social sciences, applied sciences, pedagogical sciences,” and if they had worked as a teacher in elementary schools) and twelve research based items. The research based items are related with: (1) strengths and weaknesses of elementary school curriculum and its implementation in general, (2) problems specifically related with the dimensions (objectives, content, instructional process, resources and assessment and evaluation) of curriculum and (3) the local characteristics and needs of elementary school students and teachers in Kars (see Appendix D).

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedure was as follows; firstly, permission from the METU Ethics Council to conduct the survey was taken (see Appendix E). Then, the researcher applied specifically to Kars Directorate of National Education (see Appendix F) when the METU Ethics Council approved, to realize the study in urban elementary schools in Kars city center and its districts (Akyaka, Arpaçay, Digor, Kağızman, Sarıkamış, Selim and Susuz). When the necessary permissions arrived, the survey questionnaires were then administered by the researcher to all elementary school classroom teachers ($N=336$) in the elementary schools ($N=52$) both in Kars city center and its districts, and they were recollected immediately after they were administered. Data collection process took place between 25th of May 2009 and 10th of June 2009 as seen in Table 5 below. The researcher was the only data collector through the study, and thus it enabled to cope with data collector internal validity

threat in a way (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). The researcher was present while the administering survey questionnaires to 1 - 5 grade classroom teachers. Meanwhile she was not an outsider from the school context and she was a participant of the natural setting. Otherwise, her presence could have isolated responses of participants.

Second, the researcher got across with Kars Kafkas University Education Faculty for the permission of the semi-structured interviews. After taking the necessary permissions, the procedure for the semi-structured interview with teacher educators in Kars Kafkas University Education Faculty started and continued as follows: the researcher first made an appointment with a teacher educator who was one of the members of Educational Sciences Department of Kafkas University and had studies about the new elementary school curriculum, and made an interview then. At the end of the interview, researcher asked to suggest additional teacher educators for interviewing based on the same semi-structured interview form. By this way, the researcher interviewed with six teacher educators. Interviews lasted between 40 minutes to 52 minutes and realized in the participants' offices in Kafkas University Faculty of Education. Interviewing terminated when the process generated no new references. During the face to face interviews, voice recorder was used with the permission of the interviewees. Four of the interviewees gave the permission for voice recording. Two of the participants did not give the permission for voice recording and during these two interviews the researcher took extensive notes; that is to say, the researcher tried to write each thing the participants said by noting their tone of voice, especially the high tones used by the participants. Data gathered from the subjects through voice recording machine were transcribed by the researcher. Both transcribed data and extensive notes were sent back to interviewees' e-mail addresses for taking their confirmation to the data and usage of the data gathered from them during the analysis. When the necessary confirmations to the data were taken from the interviewees, data gathered from them was used in the study. All the participants gave the necessary permission to use the semi-structured interview results (See Appendix G). Semi-structured interviews and taking necessary confirmations to the data were realized between 2nd of July 2009 and 20th of January 2010 as seen in Table 5.

During the interviews with teacher educators, researcher gave importance to quality criteria of interviews defined by Kvale (1996). These quality criteria are as follows:

1. The extent of spontaneous, rich, specific, and relevant answers from the interviewee.
2. The shorter the interviewer’s questions and the longer the interviewer’s answers, the better.
3. The degree to which the interviewer follows up and clarifies the meanings of the relevant aspects of the answers.
4. The ideal interview is to a large extent interpreted throughout the interview.
5. The interviewer attempts to verify his or her interpretations of the subject’s answers in the course of the interview.
6. The interview is “self-communicating” – it is a story contained in itself that hardly requires much extra descriptions and explanations. (p. 145)

For external validity, data collection methods were described in detail. And for the internal reliability, data collected were also presented without adding comment to it in Chapter 4 results as reported quotes (LeCompte and Goetz, 1984).

Table 5

Timeline of the Study

	January – April 2009	May – June 2009	July – September 2009	October – November 2009	December- January 2009	February – May 2010
1. Literature review	×	×	×	×	×	
2. Preparation of survey questionnaire	×					
3. Preparation of semi-structured interview form	×					
4. Data collection through survey questionnaire		×				
5. Data collection through semi-structured interview			×		×	
6. Data analysis				×	×	
7. Write-up						×

3.6. Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis procedures are presented in the following part both for the survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview form, respectively.

3.6.1. Data Analysis for Survey Questionnaire

For the basic features of the demographic data of the respondents gathered through the survey questionnaires, descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages) was used. Results of the questionnaire were also analyzed with necessary descriptive statistic methods. During the analysis of demographic data gathered through survey questionnaires, SPSS 12 program was used.

Data gathered from open ended questions in survey questionnaire were analyzed through content analysis method. Content analysis method was realized as follows (see Figure 1); firstly, the researcher wrote the codes in each survey questionnaire based on each question (see Figure 2 and 3 in Appendix H). Data were arranged with respect to codes found generally in all data (see the samples in Figures 4, 5, and 6 in Appendix H). Themes were determined based on the codes determined in the survey questionnaires (see Figure 7 and 8 in Appendix H) by the researcher.

In qualitative analysis, “reliability has limited meaning, but it is popular in qualitative research when there is interest in comparing coding among several coders” (Cresswell and Clark, 2007, p.135). In this study a second coder, who had an experience in content analysis method, worked just after the researcher finished coding the survey questionnaires and based on both coders’ results the coders were able to develop agreement by discussing all points (see Figure 9 in Appendix I). If there was a disagreement in the points derived, two coders tried to put two points together in one point or chose one of the points which was more meaningful to the context according to each coder. As a result of two coders’ results, final themes were constituted as presented below. The findings were interpreted and reported in the Chapter 4 results section and frequencies were also reported in results section. Besides, explanatory quotes were used to give an idea of the themes.

Final themes derived from data gathered from classroom teachers through survey questionnaires were as follows in Table 6 and Table 7. In Table 6 below, themes emerged based on both positive and negative dimensions of curriculum are presented.

Table 6

Positive and Negative Themes Derived Based on Dimensions of Curriculum

Dimensions of Curriculum	Positive Perceptions	Negative Perceptions
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student related issues • Social / cultural issues • Structure of objectives • Miscellaneous ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student related issues • Social / cultural issues • Structure of objectives • Miscellaneous ones
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of content • Format of content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of content • Format of content • Miscellaneous ones
Instructional methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification / properties • Miscellaneous ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification/ properties • Miscellaneous ones
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification / properties • Miscellaneous ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualification / properties • Miscellaneous ones
Assessment and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format • Miscellaneous ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format • Miscellaneous ones

Themes derived based on classroom teachers' perceptions about suggestions for overcoming classroom teachers' negative perceptions, and additional regional needs of students and classroom teachers are shared in the following Table 7.

Table 7

Other Perceptions Represented under Themes Derived

Themes Derived	
Suggestions for overcoming negative perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions about teachers • Suggestions about appropriateness to regional / local needs • Suggestions with regard to parents' involvement to educational process • Suggestions about students • Suggestions about schools • Miscellaneous suggestions
Additional regional needs of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format of curriculum • Scope of curriculum • Social / cultural issues • Miscellaneous ones
Additional regional needs of classroom teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format of curriculum • Scope of curriculum • Miscellaneous ones

3.6.2. Data Analysis for Semi-Structured Interview Form

Demographic data gathered from teacher educators were analyzed through descriptive statistics (frequency). In addition, for the qualitative data gathered through semi structured interview form, the researcher benefitted from content analysis method (see Figure 1). The procedure applied by the researcher was as follows; at first the interview data were arranged and coded according to the concepts found generally in all data, and then she determined the themes (see Figure 10 in Appendix J). Then, a second coder, who had an experience in content analysis method, worked in the analysis of data gathered from semi-structured interviews for the reliability of the data analysis. When there was an agreement based on the findings of each coder; the findings were used in the study (see Figure 11 in Appendix J). If there was a disagreement in the points derived also during the analysis of semi-structured interview form, two coders tried to put two points together in one point or chose one of the points which was more meaningful to the context according to each coder. The final findings were interpreted and reported, and explanatory quotes were used to give an idea of the themes as seen in Chapter 4 results section.

For verifying the validity of the semi-structured interview form; member check method was used for the data gathered through the interview form (LeCompte and Goetz, 1984). The data gathered from the interviewees were transcribed by the researcher and sent back to interviewees' e-mail addresses for taking their confirmation to the data and usage of the data gathered from them during data analysis. If the necessary confirmations to the data were taken from the interviewees, data gathered from them were used in the study. In this study all six participants (teacher educators) gave their permission to use data gathered from them through semi-structured interviews (see Appendix G). For providing the external reliability, characteristics of subjects (Gender, age, academic rank, duration of position title, employment duration at the Kafkas University Education Faculty, if they had been abroad for education purposes “undergraduate study, master study, doctorate study or for research purposes,” major field of study “social sciences, applied sciences, pedagogical sciences,” and if they had worked as a teacher in elementary schools) were described in detail in Chapter 4 results part (LeCompte and Goetz, 1984). Final themes derived from data gathered from teacher educators were as follows (Table 8).

Table 8

Themes Derived from Teacher Educators' Perceptions Based on Research Questions

Teacher Educators' Perceptions Based on Research Questions	
Perceptions about elementary school curriculum in general and in Kars conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format of curriculum • Social / cultural issues • Miscellaneous ones
Perceptions about of elementary school curriculum based on five dimensions of curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives • Content • Instructional methods • Resources • Assessment and evaluation
Perceptions about needs of classroom teachers in Kars conditions and suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Needs of classroom teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Format of curriculum ▪ Miscellaneous ones ○ Suggestion for solving needs of classroom teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Format of curriculum ▪ Social / cultural issues

A flow chart that represents the data analysis process (survey questionnaires and semi-structured interview form) applied during the study is presented in Figure 1 below.

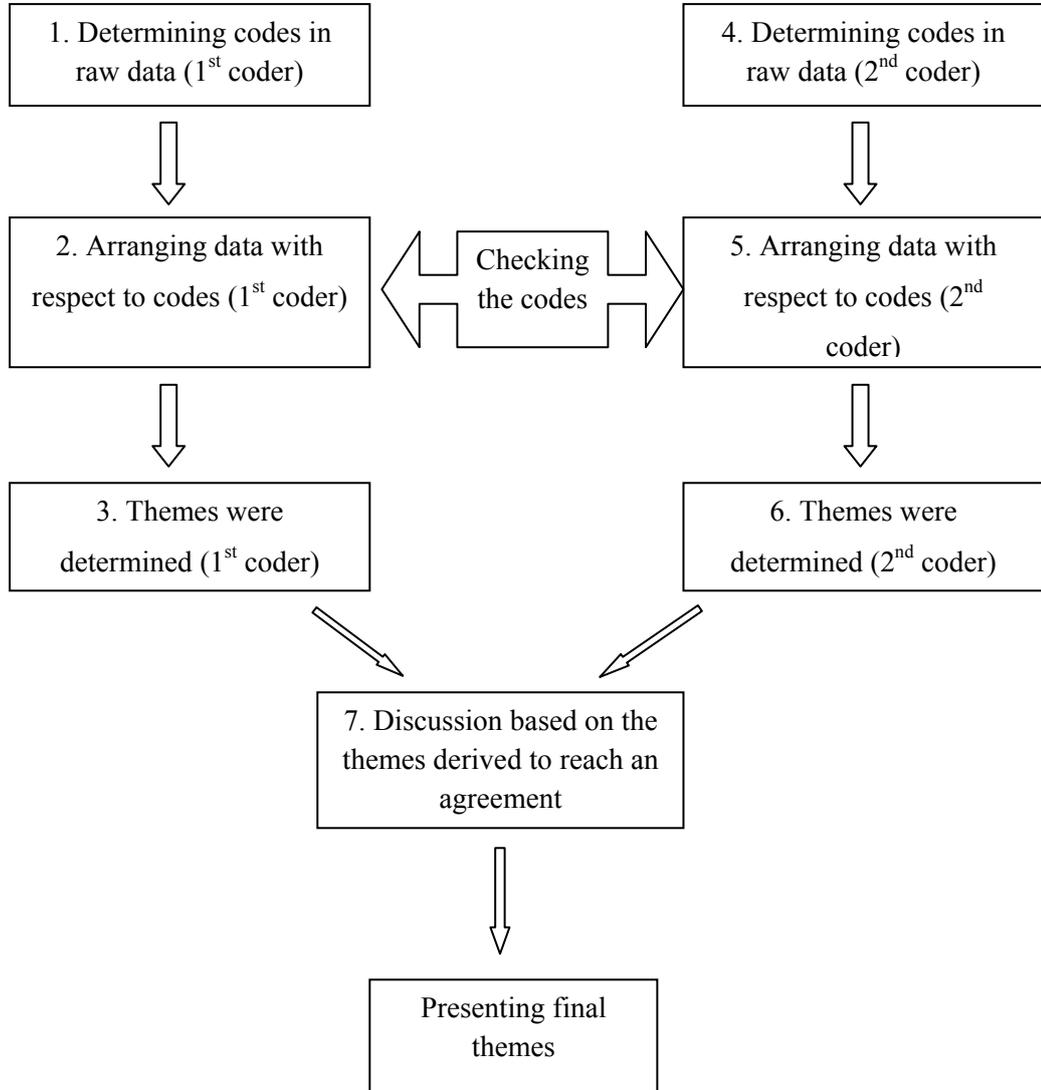


Figure 1. Data analysis process applied during the study.

3.7. Limitations of the Study

1. Data gathered from the volunteer elementary school teachers (Classroom teachers) in urban settings in Kars and its districts (Susuz, Arpaçay, Akyaka, Digor, Kağızman, Selim and Sarıkamış) were limited to 2008-2009 academic school year.

2. Data gathered from teacher educators (Ranging from teaching assistant to Full Professors in Kafkas University Education Faculty) were limited to 2008-2009 academic school year and based on six teacher educators sampled through snowball sampling method.
3. The researcher is one of the participants of Kafkas University Faculty of Education; this might also be an internal validity threat to this study on the behalf of the data collection conducted with teacher educators in Kafkas University.
4. In this study, due to low number of classroom teachers in Kars Province the whole population was administered the survey questionnaire, yet only volunteers responded. Teachers' participation may have dependent on their philosophical beliefs with regard the new elementary school curriculum and results may subjectively be affected by it.
5. During this study, all participant teacher educators interviewed were in Educational Sciences Department, to strengthen the results there should be teacher educators who were in Classroom Teaching Department.
6. All data gathered through this study were limited to written data in survey questionnaires gathered from classroom teachers; thus, "Kars conditions" as an issue had addressed by classroom teachers, more in depth studies could enlighten what participant classroom teachers meant by "Kars conditions".

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study is aimed to gather data in different dimensions; the strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers face with the new elementary school curriculum (Grade 1 - 5) and its implementation in Kars, and also examines the students' educational needs and classroom teachers' needs from the window of Kars' local characteristics with respect to classroom teachers' perceptions; teacher educators' perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers face while implementing the new elementary school curriculum, and classroom teachers' needs about the curriculum.

This chapter presents demographic data and qualitative data gathered through survey questionnaires from classroom teachers and semi structured interviews realized with teacher educators.

4.1. Demographic Data

This section is sought to present demographic data of classroom teachers gathered through survey questionnaires and teacher educators' demographic data gathered through semi structured interview form, respectively.

4.1.1. Classroom Teachers' Demographic Data

This part presents classroom teachers' demographic information based on; place of work in Kars Province, gender, age, highest degree gained, faculty of graduation, teaching credentials, total teaching experience, teaching experience in elementary schools in Kars, teaching experience in the current school, size of school, size of class, the physical conditions of the schools, if the classroom teachers have in-service training and in what topics, sources of information the classroom teachers benefitted about the new elementary school curriculum are presented respectively in the proceeding parts.

The Gender: Table 9 below summarizes gender distribution of participant classroom teachers. As seen from Table 9, the sample of this study consisted of predominantly females ($n=111$; 62.72%) while males ($n=66$; 37.28%) were more than 30 percent of the sample.

Table 9

Participant Classroom Teachers' Gender Distribution

Gender	n	%
Female	111	62.72
Male	66	37.28
Total	177	100.00

Age: When the participant classroom teachers' age distributions are taken into account, it is observed that almost half of the participants were in the 25 – 34 age group ($n=98$; 55.36%) as presented in Table 10. Besides, more than a quarter of the participant classroom teachers were in the 35 – 44 age group ($n=48$; 27.11%).

Table 10

Participant Classroom Teachers' Age Distribution

Age groups	n	%
20-24	6	3.39
25-29	57	32.20
30-34	41	23.16
35-39	31	17.51
40-44	17	9.60
45-49	7	3.95
50-54	16	9.04
55-59	2	1.13
Total	177	100.00

Graduation: The participant classroom teachers were asked to state highest academic degree they gained and the faculties of graduation, the results are shared in the next part, respectively.

About the participant classroom teachers' highest academic degree they gained, in Table 11 it is seen that a high number of them were undergraduates ($n=142$; 80.23%), while others hold a pre license degree ($n=26$; 14.69%) and only a few had a master degree ($n=9$; 5.08%).

Table 11

Distribution of Participant Classroom Teachers' Highest Academic Degree Gained

Highest academic degree gained	n	%
Pre license*	26	14.69
Undergraduate	142	80.23
Master	9	5.08
Total	177	100.00

*Two year undergraduate degree

Participant classroom teachers' faculties of graduation are presented in the proceeding Table 12. When faculty of graduation is taken into account, it can be seen that a high percentage of the participants ($n=128$; 72.32%) graduated from faculties of education. Moreover, 16 of the participants were education institute graduates (9.04%), 11 of them were education college graduates (6.22%), 9 of them were science and arts faculty graduates (5.08%) and 13 of them (7.34%) were graduates of other faculties that are not mentioned below.

Table 12

Distribution of Participant Classroom Teachers' Faculty of Graduation

Faculty of graduation	n	%
Education faculty	128	72.32
Science and arts faculty	9	5.08
Education college	11	6.22
Education institute	16	9.04
Other	13	7.34
Total	177	100.00

Teaching Credentials: Among the distribution with respect to participant classroom teachers' credential, a great amount of them ($n=145$; 81.92%) had a credential in elementary school teaching as seen in Table 13 below. Additionally, the other participants had different credentials other than elementary school teaching ($n=32$; 18.08%). Besides, Appendix K contains data about participant classroom teachers' highest academic degree they gained, faculties of graduation and credential are summarized with respect to place of work.

Table 13

Participant Classroom Teachers' Credential Distribution

Credential	n	%
Elementary school teaching	145	81.92
Other	32	18.08
Total	177	100.00

Teaching Experience: The participant classroom teachers' teaching experiences were asked in three dimensions; total teaching experience, teaching experience in Kars Province and teaching experience in their current schools. These are summarized in the next parts.

Table 14 shows total teaching experience of the participant classroom teachers. Total teaching experience of the classroom teachers in years had the highest value in 6 – 10 years group ($n=59$; 33.33%). Higher than half of the participants' total experience ($n=95$; 53.67%) was between 1 – 10 years group. Meanwhile, lowest number of participants was in 36 – 40 years group ($n=1$; .56%) as shown in Table 14 below.

Table 14

Total Teaching Experience of Participant Classroom Teachers

Total experience (in years)	n	%
1-5	36	20.34
6-10	59	33.33
11-15	29	16.38
16-20	23	12.99
21-25	9	5.08
26-30	7	3.95
31-35	13	7.34
36-40	1	.56
Total	177	100.00

About the participant classroom teachers' Kars experience in years, it is seen that highest number of participants was in 1 – 5 years group ($n= 61$; 34.46%) and more than half of them ($n=117$; 66.10%) had between 1 and 10 years Kars experience. The lowest number of participants was in 36 – 40 years group ($n=1$; .56%) as shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15

Kars Experience of Participant Classroom Teachers

Kars experience (in years)	n	%
1-5	61	34.46
6-10	56	31.64
11-15	26	14.69
16-20	21	11.86
21-25	4	2.26
26-30	3	1.69
31-35	5	2.82
36-40	1	.56
Total	177	100.00

Lastly, participant classroom teachers were asked about their experience in their current schools, the results indicate that a big amount of them ($n=130$; 73.45%) had experience in their current schools between 1 to 5 years as in Table 16 below. Almost all of them ($n= 153$; 86.44%) had experience between 1 to 10 years. In Appendix L, participant classroom teachers' total teaching experience, experience in elementary schools in Kars and experience in their current schools are shown with respect to place of work.

Table 16

Experience in Current Schools of Participant Classroom Teachers

Experience in current school (in years)	n	%
1-5	130	73.45
6-10	23	12.99
11-15	11	6.21
16-20	6	3.39
21-25	6	3.39
26-30	1	.56
Total	177	100.00

School Quality: This section includes results of participants' school and class sizes, and physical conditions of their schools under kindergarten, library, open gym, gym, multifunctional room, science laboratory, computer laboratory and other dimensions. These are presented respectively in the proceeding parts.

Participant classroom teachers were asked about their schools' sizes, their answers to this question show that more than half of the participants' schools ($n=83$; 57.7%) were between 101 and 500 students as in Table 17. Meanwhile, the lowest value of total size of classroom teachers' schools was between 0 – 100 students group ($n=3$; 1.70%).

Table 17

Total Size of Participant Classroom Teachers' Schools

Total student	n	%
0-100	3	1.70
101-200	21	11.90
201-300	38	21.50
301-400	24	13.60
401-500	19	10.70
501-600	13	7.30
601-700	16	9.00
701-800	23	13.00
801-900	9	5.10
1401-1500	6	3.40
1701-1800	5	2.80
Total	177	100.00

Table 18 below summarizes participant classroom teachers' class size in frequencies and percentages. In relation to classroom teachers' classes size; a

quarter of classroom teachers ($n=45$; 25.40%) stated that the size of their classes was between 26 and 30 students. The highest range of the participant classroom teachers' classes size constituted almost half of the participants ($n=88$; 49.70%) and was between 21 and 30 students. While only two of the participants (1.10%) mentioned that the size of their classes was 46 through highest students (Table 18). According to the class size, the average student in classes was about 27.

Table 18

Class Size of Participant Classroom Teachers

Total student	n	%
Lowest through 10	3	1.70
11-15	13	7.30
16-20	19	10.70
21-25	43	24.30
26-30	45	25.40
31-35	29	16.40
36-40	20	11.30
41-45	3	1.70
46 through highest	2	1.10
Total	177	100.00

Physical conditions of classroom teachers' schools in different dimensions; presence of kindergarten, library, open gym, gym, multifunctional room, science laboratory, computer laboratory and other were asked participant classroom teachers and their answers to this question are presented in Table 19 below, and the frequencies and percentages are given.

When Table 19 is analyzed, physical conditions of school in urban elementary schools in Kars are presented. A big amount of the participant classroom teachers' ($n=125$; 70.62%) schools had kindergarten while almost 30 percent of the classroom teachers' ($n=52$; 29.38%) schools did not have kindergarten. The presence of library in the participant teachers' schools had the same values as the presence of kindergarten. For instance, 125 participant classroom teachers' (70.62%) schools had library whereas 52 of them (29.38%) did not have library in their schools.

As shown in Table 19, only a quarter of the classroom teachers' ($n=48$; 27.12%) schools had gym and a certain number of them ($n=129$; 72.88%) did not have gym. When the presence of open gym in the participant classroom teachers' schools is analyzed, it is observed that a quarter of the classroom teachers' ($n=46$; 25.99%) schools had open gym while three fourth of the classroom teachers ($n=131$; 74.01) mentioned that their schools did not have an open gym.

About the presence of multifunctional room, only 23 of classroom teachers' (12.99%) schools had multifunctional room whereas 154 of them (87.01%) did not have multifunctional room. When the existence of laboratory is examined from Table 19, more than half of the classroom teachers' ($n=115$; 64.97%) schools had science laboratory and 62 of them (35.03%) did not have science laboratory in their schools. In addition, a high number of classroom teachers' ($n=157$; 88.70%) schools had computer laboratory while only 20 of them (11.30%) did not have computer laboratory. When classroom teachers were asked if their schools had any other conditions, only one of them (.56%) answered this question as "yes" and this school had a conference room (Table 19).

Table 19

Physical Conditions of Participant Classroom Teachers

	Kinder-Garten		Library		Open gym		Gym		Multi functional room		Science laboratory		Computer laboratory		Other	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	125	70.62	125	70.62	46	25.99	48	27.12	23	12.99	115	64.97	157	88.70	1	.56
No	52	29.38	52	29.38	131	74.01	129	72.88	154	87.01	62	35.03	20	11.30	176	99.44

In-service Training: Participant classroom teachers' in-service training status in the last three years was also asked along with these trainings' topics, their answers are given in Table 20 and Table 21, respectively. In relation to classroom teachers' in-service training status (Table 20); 110 participants (62.15%) had in-service training whereas 67 participants (37.85%) did not participate any in-service training in the last three years.

Table 20

Classroom Teachers' In-service Training Status

In-service training	n	%
Yes	110	62.15
No	67	37.85
Total	177	100.00

Participant classroom teachers who had in-service training in the last three years were also asked in what topics they had in-service training; their answers are presented in Table 21 in frequencies. As seen in Table 21, more than half of the classroom teachers ($n=110$; 62.15%) participated the trainings in various topics. Among the classroom teachers participated in-service training in last three years, they mainly received training in special education ($n=54$; 30.00%), school health ($n=27$; 15.00%) and active learning ($n=19$; 10.56%). Additionally, participants received training in new elementary school curriculum ($n=6$; 3.33%), neuro linguistic programming ($n=2$; 1.1%), democracy education ($n=1$; .56%) and learning styles ($n=1$; .56%) as in Table 21.

Table 21

Topics of In-service Trainings Classroom Teachers Benefitted

Codes	n	%
Special education	54	30.00
School health	27	15.00
Active learning	19	10.56
Integrated education	12	6.67
Guidance	11	6.11
English teaching	10	5.56
Computer literacy	8	4.44
Class / school management	7	3.89
New elementary school curriculum	6	3.33
First aid	6	3.33
Neuro linguistic programming	2	1.11
Basic education	2	1.11
Others (e.g. compound class system, 1; democracy education, 1; drama, 1; learning styles, 1; Turkish language, 1; planning projects, 1; social activities, 1; chess, 1; art, 1; music, 1; e-school, 1; adaptation to environment, 1; assessment and evaluation, 1; web designing, 1; preventing violence, 1; language teaching, 1)	16	8.89

Sources of Information about the New Elementary School Curriculum: This section includes the sources of information the classroom teachers benefitted about the new

elementary school curriculum. From the answers gathered about the sources of information, it is observed that more than half of the participants ($n=105$; 59.32%) mentioned that they benefitted from inspectors about the new elementary school curriculum as in Table 22. On the other hand, other classroom teachers mentioned internet resources ($n=47$; 26.55%), published resources ($n=31$; 17.51%), teacher guidance books ($n=22$; 12.43%), guidance teachers ($n=20$; 11.30%) and benefitted from nobody/thing ($n=19$; 10.73%).

Table 22

Sources of Information the Classroom Teachers Benefitted about the New Elementary School Curriculum

Codes	n	%
Inspectors	105	59.32
Internet resources	47	26.55
Published resources	31	17.51
Teacher guidance books	22	12.43
Guidance teachers	20	11.30
Benefitted from nobody/thing	19	10.73
Colleagues	9	5.08
Own individual efforts	5	2.82
University education	2	1.13

This section summarized the demographic information of participant classroom teachers and in the next section participant teacher educators' demographic information is shared in the next part.

4.1.2. Teacher Educators' Demographic Data

This part includes teacher educators' demographic information including; gender, age, academic title, length of time for possessing that academic title, experience in Kafkas University, experience abroad, academic field and teaching experience in elementary school and years of experience. For increasing the confidentiality of the results, the background information about teacher educators is not presented in specifically; instead, they are given in ranges in the following part.

Participant teacher educators were aged between the ages 30 and 52. Two of them were female while four were male. In relation to academic title; four of the

participants were assistant professors, one of them was doctorate research assistant and one of them was lecturer. Length of time for possessing that academic was also between four months and seven years. Their experience in Kafkas University changed from eight months to seven years. None of the participants had experience abroad and all of them were in educational sciences academic field. When the participants' teaching experience in elementary schools was considered; two of them did not have that teaching experience, however, the others' teaching experience in elementary school was changed three years to twelve years. Throughout the study, quotations presented are mentioned under pseudonyms TE-1, TE-2, up to TE-6.

This section summarized the demographic information of both the participant classroom teachers and teacher educators, and in the next section participant classroom teachers' perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum are shared under five dimensions of curriculum (Objectives, content, instructional methods, resources, assessment and evaluation) in detail. Hereinafter, classroom teachers' suggestions for overcoming their negative perceptions, and students' and classroom teachers' own additional regional needs are presented respectively.

4.2. Classroom Teachers' Perceptions about the New Elementary School Curriculum

This section is focused on the classroom teachers' perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum. Classroom teachers' perceptions were evaluated based on five dimensions of curriculum; objectives, content, instructional methods, resources, and assessment and evaluation. Besides, classroom teachers' suggestions for overcoming their negative perceptions, students' and classroom teachers' own additional regional needs are presented in this section, respectively. Throughout the study, quotations gathered from sample of classroom teachers are mentioned under pseudonyms #1, #2, up to #177.

4.2.1. Classroom Teachers' Perceptions about Objectives of the New Elementary School Curriculum

Objectives are important for teachers in instructional planning in simplifying the planning process, determining prerequisite skills and knowledge, developing valid assessments for student learning, determining desired outcome and informing students about the instructional process. This part presents the findings about how participant classroom teachers perceived the strengths and weaknesses of objectives of the new elementary school curriculum during implementation process in Kars Province. Four themes derived both from teachers' positive and negative perceptions about objectives; these are *student related issues*, *social / cultural issues*, *structure of objectives* and *miscellaneous ones* as seen in Table 23 through Table 30. In the proceeding parts results gathered based on classroom teachers' positive and negative perceptions about objectives of the new elementary school curriculum are presented in detail.

4.2.1.1. Classroom Teachers' Positive Perceptions about Objectives of the New Elementary School Curriculum

This section includes classroom teachers' positive perceptions about objective dimension of the new elementary school curriculum and these perceptions are presented under *student related issues*, *social / cultural issues*, *structure of objectives* and *miscellaneous* themes emerged when classroom teachers were asked to express their positive perceptions about objectives.

Almost all of participant classroom teachers ($n=144$; 81.36%) emphasized the *student related issues*. Among these, most frequently reported one was that objectives gave emphasis on active learning ($n=81$; 45.76%) through student centered understanding ($n=31$; 17.51%), searching ability ($n=18$; 10.17%), hands-on experience ($n=7$; 3.95%), and only one participant mentioned creativity (.56%) as seen in Table 23 below. Appropriateness to students' level ($n=30$; 16.95%) and variety in objectives ($n=21$; 11.86%) were other issues cited frequently following the emphasis on active learning. Emphasis on social skills ($n=4$; 2.26%) was also

highlighted and at this point, one of the classroom teachers (#17) emphasized ability to express students themselves and stated that “Objectives of the new elementary school curriculum give emphasis on social skills of students. For example, objectives reinforce students to express themselves especially in not crowded classrooms.” Thus, the participant (#17) believed that objectives enhanced self expression ability in students, but decreased number of students in a class was introduced as a condition for achieving this.

Table 23

Positive Perceptions about Student Related Issues in Objectives Dimension

Codes	n
Emphasis on active learning (e.g. student – centered understanding, 31; searching ability, 18; hands-on experience, 7; creativity,1)	81
Appropriate to students’ level	30
Variety in objectives (e.g. accessible, 19; international values, 1)	21
Emphasis on the individual (e.g. reinforces critical thinking, 1; appropriate to multiple intelligence theory, 1; reinforces ICT usage, 1)	5
Emphasis on students’ social skills (e.g. ability to express themselves, 1)	4
Avoids rote memorization	3

Along with *student related issues* theme, there were some positive perceptions that were put under *social / cultural issues* theme and presented in Table 24 below in frequencies. Under this theme most frequently cited issue was that objectives were enhanceable with regard to Kars conditions ($n=19$; 10.73%). Moreover, some classroom teachers brought up the issue of comprehensiveness of objectives ($n=9$; 5.08%). A few classroom teachers emphasized that objectives were relevant to students’ everyday life ($n=7$; 3.95%) and one of them (#162) said that “This curriculum’s objectives are enhancing students to learn skills relevant to their real lives. This type of objectives motivates students to apply what they have learnt in their real lives”.

Among the classroom teachers who were in favor of emphasizing *social / cultural issues* of objectives of the new elementary school curriculum, only a small number of them claimed that objectives addressed Kars’ societal needs ($n=5$; 2.82%) and Turkey’s conditions ($n=1$; .56%), they were flexible according to geographical

conditions ($n=4$; 2.26%) and they increased the right usage of Turkish language ($n=1$; .56%) in Table 24.

Table 24

Positive Perceptions about Social / Cultural Issues in Objectives Dimension

Codes	n
Enhanceable objectives with regard to Kars conditions	19
Comprehensive (e.g. up-to-date topics, 6; social topics, 1; not intensive, 1)	9
Relevant to students' everyday life	7
Addresses societal needs (e.g. that of Kars)	5
Flexible according to geographical conditions	4
Addresses Turkey's conditions	1
Increases the right usage of Turkish	1

Beside the *student related issues* and *social / cultural issues* themes, there were other perceptions regarding *structure of objectives* as given in Table 25 in frequencies. There were also a small number of classroom teachers ($n=10$; 5.65%) emphasized positive perceptions about *structure of objectives*. The participants in this group mostly preferred to say that *structure of objectives* were consistent with content ($n=4$; 2.26%) and others alleged that objectives related previous learning of students ($n=3$; 1.69%) as seen in Table 25.

Table 25

Positive Perceptions about Structure of Objectives in Objectives Dimension

Codes	n
Consistent with content	4
Relates previous learning	3
Clear	2
Enhances visuality	1

There were other positive perceptions about objectives that were not put in the above themes and these were named as *miscellaneous* ones and given in frequencies in Table 26 below. The participants in this group mostly claimed that objectives increased parents' involvement to educational process ($n=5$; 2.82%) and as one specifically added objectives increased student – parent collaboration (.56%). Teachers' role ($n=4$; 2.26%) and appropriateness to school conditions (e.g. physical

conditions, facilities, equipments) ($n=2$; 1.13%) were other issues alleged by a few participants.

Table 26

Miscellaneous Positive Perceptions in Objectives Dimension

Codes	n
Increases parents' involvement to educational process (e.g. student-parent collaboration, 1)	5
Teachers' role	4
Appropriate for school conditions (e.g. physical conditions, facilities, equipments)	2
Appropriate to compound class system	1
Not traditional	1

Besides positive perceptions about objectives of elementary school curriculum, there are also negative perceptions; these negative perceptions are summarized in the next part in detail.

4.2.1.2. Classroom Teachers' Negative Perceptions about Objectives of the New Elementary School Curriculum

This part covers the classroom teachers' negative perceptions about the objectives of the new elementary school curriculum. Negative perceptions are given under the same themes like positive perceptions; *student related issues*, *social / cultural issues*, *structure of objectives* and *miscellaneous ones* in the following part.

When the participant classroom teachers were asked about their negative perceptions about objectives, under *student related issues* theme a number of them did not find them appropriate to students' level ($n=12$; 6.78%) and only one of them said that objectives increased rote memorization as seen Table 27 below.

Table 27

Negative Perceptions about Student Related Issues in Objectives Dimension

Codes	n
Not appropriate to students' level	12
Increases rote memorization	1

Along with perceptions under *student related issues* theme, there were also classroom teachers' negative perceptions about objectives that were put under *social / cultural issues* and given in Table 28 in frequencies. Almost a quarter of the classroom teachers alleged that objectives of the new elementary school curriculum were not accessible with regard to Kars conditions ($n=45$; 25.42%) (Table 28). At this point, one of the participants (#145) stated that during preparation of objectives, regional differences were not considered; rural regions and urban regions were put into same category. Moreover, another participant (#124) said that objectives based on sightseeing and observation were ridiculous under Kars' climate conditions.

Among the classroom teachers, few of them emphasized that objectives were not relevant to students' everyday life ($n=3$; 1.69%). Only few thought that objectives were about not addressing societal needs ($n=2$; 1.13%), they were not flexible according to Kars conditions ($n=1$; .56%) and there were language problems ($n=1$; .56%) under this theme (Table 28). The participant (#120), who alleged that there was a language problem, mentioned and suggested that:

Language problem is one of the most important problems in achieving the objectives. Especially in Kurdish villages, children do not know Turkish when they start to elementary school. Most the teachers do not know Kurdish, too. When this is taken into consideration, one year is passed to overcome this problematic situation. Especially in schools these like, there should be one extra year as a preparation class.

As understood from the quotation above, the participant (#120) emphasized lack of knowledge about Turkish language and the need for an extra one year preparation class for students with language problem. Apart from that, another participant (#159) raised inaccessibility of objectives with regard to Kars conditions stated that:

Achieving objectives under Kars conditions is not possible, because students have been living the conflict of being villager or a town dweller under these circumstances. And economical situations obstruct reaching necessary resources, too. Only 3% of our students have internet connection in their homes.

Thereby, the participant (#159) specified the reasons behind the inaccessibility of the objectives under Kars conditions as conflict of roles in the society and lack of resources.

Table 28

Negative Perceptions about Social / Cultural Issues in Objectives Dimension

Codes	n
Not accessible objectives with regard to Kars conditions (e.g. socio economic, 5; climate, 1; cultural, 1)	45
Not relevant with students' everyday life	3
Not address societal needs	2
Not flexible according to Kars conditions	1
Language problems	1

Beside the *student related issues* and *social / cultural issues* themes, classroom teachers' negative perceptions were highlighted and these perceptions are summarized under *structure of objectives* theme in Table 29 in frequencies. Among the classroom teachers emphasized their negative perceptions under *structure of objectives* theme, a small number of them stated that objectives were not relevant to students' previous learning ($n=6$; 3.39%) and another small group raised the idea that achieving objectives by students took too much time ($n=6$; 3.39%) (Table 29).

Table 29

Negative Perceptions about Structure of Objectives in Objectives Dimension

Codes	n
Not relevant with students' previous learning	6
Takes too much time to be achieved by students	6
Not consistent with content	4
Not appropriate with SBS system (Placement test)	2

There were also other perceptions about objectives of the new elementary school curriculum that were not put into themes mentioned above. These are given in following Table 30 as *miscellaneous ones* and presented in frequencies. In Table 30 below, there were classroom teachers saying that objectives of the new elementary school curriculum were not appropriate to their schools' condition ($n=35$; 19.77%). Some of them specifically stated that they were not appropriate to physical conditions ($n=7$; 3.95%), and materials and equipments ($n=18$; 10.17%) of their schools. Meanwhile, one of the participants (#172) summarized this as objectives could only be achieved in schools with ideal physical conditions, s/he found that they were not appropriate to his / her school's conditions. Besides, only one participant mentioned that objectives were not appropriate for compound class

system (.56%). Teachers' indifference about the objectives ($n=1$; .56%) was only mentioned by one participant.

Table 30

Miscellaneous Negative Perceptions in Objectives Dimension

Codes	n
Not appropriate to schools' conditions (e.g. material, equipment, 18; physical, 7)	35
High number of students in class	5
Not increase parental involvement in educational process (e.g. parents' support, 2; parents' indifference, 1)	5
Too many objectives to be achieved by students	3
Not appropriate for compound class	1
Teachers' indifference about objectives	1

Along with classroom teachers' perceptions about objective dimension of the new elementary school curriculum, classroom teachers were also asked to state their perceptions about content dimension of the new elementary school curriculum. The results are shared in the following part.

4.2.2. Classroom Teachers' Perceptions about Content of the New Elementary School Curriculum

Content is the subject index, which is determined appropriately to objectives, is a significant element in curriculum planning. In this part, the findings about how classroom teachers perceived the strengths and weaknesses of content of the new elementary school curriculum during implementation process in Kars Province are presented. Three themes were derived from teachers' positive and negative perceptions about content; these were *scope of content*, *format of content* and *miscellaneous ones* as seen in Table 31 through 35. Positive and negative perceptions are summarized in the proceeding parts respectively under the themes derived.

4.2.2.1. Classroom Teachers' Positive Perceptions about Content of the New Elementary School Curriculum

This section covers the participant classroom teachers' positive perceptions about the content dimension of the new elementary school curriculum. According to the data gathered from classroom teachers about their positive perceptions in content dimension of the new elementary school curriculum, two themes were derived; *scope of content* and *format of content*. The results are shared in the next parts under the themes derived.

The findings related to different classroom teachers' perceptions under *scope of content* theme are given in Table 31 below and it presents the responses in frequencies. Almost a quarter of the participants agreed on the issue that content of the new elementary school curriculum allowed for active learning ($n=43$, 24.29%) and some of them specifically emphasized student-centered understanding ($n=13$; 7.34%), searching ($n=9$; 5.08%) and hands-on experience ($n=5$; 2.82%). Among the perceptions under *scope of content* theme, almost one fifth of the classroom teachers found content comprehensive ($n=34$; 19.21%) (Table 31). Following the active learning issue and comprehensiveness of content, some of the classroom teachers thought that content made education attractive ($n=19$; 10.73%) and there were 30 classroom teachers stated that content was relevant to students' everyday life (16.95%). At this point, a participant (#22) emphasized that "With respect to previous curriculum, students are more integrated to their lives with this content and now there is a connection between school and students' real lives." In the quotation, the participant (#22) highlighted the relevancy of the school and students' real lives through the content of the new elementary school curriculum.

Table 31

Positive Perceptions about Scope of Content Dimension

Codes	n
Allows to active learning (e.g. student-centered understanding, 13; searching, 9; hands-on experience, 5)	43
Comprehensive (e.g. variety in content, 22; up-to-date topics, 5; not intensive, 3; social topics, 1)	34
Relevant to students' everyday life	30
Makes education attractive	19
Addresses Turkey's general needs	2
Addresses to Kars' conditions	1
Interdisciplinary	1
Global values emphasized	1
Useful	1
Increases motivation	1

The next theme emerged was the *format of the content*. Under the *format of content* theme, there are classroom teachers' perceptions given in Table 32 in frequencies. Among the classroom teachers participated to this study, a small number of teachers alleged that content was appropriate to students' level ($n=16$; 9.04%). Besides, a participant (#158) made an interesting point about self confidence issue and stated that "There are more children with higher self confidence, but due to lack of necessary content, students have become self confident but know nothing about subjects. I do not find any positive thing in this curriculum." Thus, the participant (#158) believed that content of the new elementary school curriculum increased students' self confidence which is valuable; however, s/he had some doubts in the students' self confidence issue, since s/he believed that students could not learn anything about the subject index but they behaved as if they knew.

Table 32

Positive Perceptions about Format of Content Dimension

Codes	n
Appropriate to students' level	16
Visual	8
Practical	5
Consider individual differences	4
Appropriate to objectives	4
Flexible	3
Appropriate to implement multiple intelligence theory	3
Appropriate to students' needs	2
Appeals to all senses	2
Reinforces to reach information	2
Encourages critical thinking	1
Increases students' self confidence	1
Develops students' imagination	1
Technology supported	1
Easy to understand	1

Beside the positive perceptions of classroom teachers about the content dimension of the new elementary school curriculum there were also negative ones; these are shared in the next part.

4.2.2.2. Classroom Teachers' Negative Perceptions about Content of the New Elementary School Curriculum

This section shares the classroom teachers' negative perceptions about the content dimension of the new elementary school curriculum. With respect to data gathered from classroom teachers about their negative perceptions, three different themes were emerged; *scope of the content*, *format of the content* and *miscellaneous ones*. The results under these themes are summarized in the proceeding parts in detail.

Negative perceptions under *scope of content* theme are presented in Table 33 in frequencies. There were perceptions raised by a certain number of classroom teachers, these teachers raised the idea that content of the new elementary school curriculum did not address Kars' conditions ($n=31$; 17.51%) (Table 33). A participant (#122), at this point, mentioned and suggested that content was not appropriate to students' level and it was difficult to teach them and in addition, s/he advised that Kars' conditions should also be considered while preparation of

curriculum. Another participant (#137) stated about the addressing Kars' conditions issue as:

In textbooks, simply, seasons are pictured with beaches, sun and sea. Children here know neither beach nor sea. It created a circumstance as if in summers all people go to sea. However, in here in summer holidays children work in fields or constructions. There is a conflict between what textbooks pictured and children's real lives.

The quotation indicates that local characteristics should also be considered in curriculum preparation. Moreover, some others thought that content was not comprehensive ($n=26$; 14.69%). A few participants also cited the issue of not having enough topics about Atatürkçülük ($n=3$; 1.69%) and a participant (#99) emphasized that there was not enough topics about Atatürkçülük and s/he strongly wanted to mention this. Some of the classroom teachers emphasized that content was not relevant to students' everyday life ($n=11$; 6.21%). A participant (#17), at this point, stated that it was too difficult to explain topics that were not concrete for students and not relevant to students' everyday life and another participant (#78) suggested that:

There should be a distinction between urban and rural regions. It is difficult to explain children traffic and traffic lights in a region that does not have them. I know, it is important to know them, but when there is not an application of them in real life, knowledge can stay only in short term memory and cannot be transmitted to long term memory.

Thereby, the participant (#78) noticed the differences between urban and rural regions, and s/he gave importance to concreteness and relevance of topics to students' everyday life.

Table 33

Negative Perceptions about Scope of Content Dimension

Codes	n
Not addresses Kars' conditions	31
Not comprehensive (e.g.; not enough grammar topics, 3; too simple, 2; not enough, 2; too complex, 2; not detailed, 1; too many activities, 2)	26
Not relevant with students' everyday life	11
Not enough topics about Atatürkçülük	3
Not appropriate to previous learning	1

Second theme derived was *format of content*. In Table 34, negative perceptions about format of the new elementary school curriculum's content are indicated in frequencies. Some classroom teachers stated that *format of content* was not appropriate to students' level ($n=15$; 8.47%) (Table 34). There were also perceptions that it was not possible to finish the content on given time ($n=7$; 3.95%). About time issue, a participant (#155) mentioned that they could not finish content on time and according to him / her there was conflict between allocated time and employed time to implement the curriculum.

Table 34

Negative Perceptions about Format of Content Dimension

Codes	n
Not appropriate to students' level	15
Takes too much time (Not possible to finish on given time)	7
Not consider individual differences	3
Not comprehensible for students	3
Not consistent with objectives	2
Not appropriate to SBS system (Placement test)	1
Not enough visuality	1

There were also negative perceptions that could not be put in the previous themes and named as *miscellaneous ones* and presented in Table 35. A small number of classroom teachers emphasized that content did not increase parental involvement in educational process ($n=10$; 5.65%) and one of them specifically indicated that there was not any communication with parents. A participant (#16) mentioned about language issue that due to language problem, content was not appropriate to students' level.

Table 35

Miscellaneous Negative Perceptions in Content Dimension

Codes	n
Not increase parental involvement in educational process (e.g. no communication with parents, 1)	10
Language problem	1
Students' indifference	1

Up to this point classroom teachers' both positive and negative perceptions about objective and content dimensions of the new elementary school curriculum are shared. In the next part, both positive and negative perceptions about instructional methods are explained in detail.

4.2.3. Classroom Teachers' Perceptions about Instructional Methods of the New Elementary School Curriculum

Instructional methods are used for delivery of the subject index; there are different ways to teach students a given topic and these methods are selected by teachers for presenting the curriculum, so their perceptions are crucial at this point. Classroom teachers were asked to express their positive and negative perceptions about recommended instructional methods of the new elementary school curriculum. Two themes were derived from teachers' positive and negative perceptions about instructional methods, these are; *qualification* and *miscellaneous ones* as seen Table 35 through Table 39. These results are presented in the following parts, respectively.

4.2.3.1. Classroom Teachers' Positive Perceptions about Instructional Methods of the New Elementary School Curriculum

This part covers the classroom teachers' positive perceptions about instructional methods of the new elementary school curriculum. From the perceptions gathered two themes were emerged; *qualification* and *miscellaneous ones*. Under these themes results are shared in the next part.

Classroom teachers' positive perceptions about instructional methods under *qualification* theme are presented in Table 36 below in frequencies. The results showed that more than half of the classroom teachers emphasized the issue that there was a variety in instructional methods ($n=96$; 54.24%). Almost a quarter of classroom teachers emphasized the active learning issue ($n=48$; 27.12%) and specifically stated student centered understanding ($n=21$; 11.86%), hands on experience ($n=10$; 5.65%) and increasing understanding ($n=1$; .56%) issues.

Only a few participants stated that instructional methods considered individual differences ($n=4$; 2.26%). One of the participants (#51), at this point, elaborated considering individual differences issue as “New curriculum enables students to be more social individuals. It is very useful to visual, auditory and tactile students, so do all students. Learning has become more entertaining for students through these methods.”

A further point made in this respect was raised by another participant (#96) as curriculum had to consider learning differences as a basic requirement. Thus, these two quotations mentioned above indicate the importance of individual differences in learning and highlight one of the premises of the new elementary school curriculum.

Table 36

Positive Perceptions about Qualification in Instructional Methods Dimension

Codes	n
Variety (e.g. up-to-date, 3; efficient, 2; modern, 1)	96
Emphasis on active learning (e.g. student-centered understanding, 21; hands on experience, 10; increases understanding, 1)	48
Appropriate to students' level	9
Applicable in school conditions (e.g. physical, 2)	6
Appropriate to multiple intelligence theory	4
Considers individual differences (e.g. appropriateness to all senses, 1; visual, 1)	4
Increases self confidence	3
Consistent with objectives	1
Leads individual development	1

Another theme emerged was the *miscellaneous ones*; Table 37 below presents classroom teachers' *miscellaneous* positive perceptions about instructional methods in frequencies. Teachers' role ($n=5$; 2.82%) was emphasized by a few number of teachers and some of them specifically raised the issue of teachers' chance to choose methods ($n=3$; 1.69%) (Table 37).

Table 37

Miscellaneous Positive Perceptions in Instructional Methods Dimension

Codes	n
Teachers' role (e.g. chance to choose methods, 3)	5
No problem	2
Increases parents' support	1

Up to this point, classroom teachers' positive perceptions are summarized, however, there also negative perceptions about instructional methods of the new elementary school curriculum, these are presented in the next part.

4.2.3.2. Classroom Teachers' Negative Perceptions about Instructional Methods of the New Elementary School Curriculum

There were also negative perceptions about instructional methods mentioned by classroom teachers and in this section these results are shared. The themes derived were *qualification* and *miscellaneous ones*.

Table 38 presents the classroom teachers' negative perceptions about the *qualification* of instructional methods of the new elementary school curriculum. A small number of classroom teachers stated that instructional methods were not appropriate to students' level ($n=6$; 3.39%). A participant (#124) summarized herein this issue as:

Instructional methods lead searching and observing, but I do not find them appropriate to students' level, because these methods are appropriate to students who come to school prepared. But most of our students did not go to preschool, they do not have computers in their homes, they do not know what library and encyclopedia are. It is too difficult to apply these methods. We prefer to use the methods what we previously used.

In the quotation above, the participant (#124) emphasized the importance of preparedness of students, preschool education, resources; due to lack of these issues s/he did not find the instructional methods appropriate to students' level.

One of the participants stated that there was not enough emphasis on social skills specifically self expression ability of students ($n=1$; .56%) (Table 38). Another participant (#122) mentioned the issue of not considering individual differences as:

We try to choose instructional methods that are appropriate to students' sensory styles, but here we use classical methods. Unfortunately we have not started to use methods like learning through research and discovery learning. And lack of resources and parents' indifference are other problems.

As understood from the quotation above, teachers preferred to use classical methods due to lack of resources and parental issues instead of the suggested ones in the new elementary school curriculum.

Table 38

Negative Perceptions about Qualification in Instructional Methods Dimension

Codes	n
Not appropriate to students' level	6
Not enough student-centered	5
Not consider individual difference	3
Not enough emphasis on social skills (e.g. self expression, 1)	1

There were other negative perceptions about instructional methods which were not put in any themes mentioned and named as *miscellaneous ones* as in Table 39. There were negative perceptions about instructional methods; such as, high number of students in their classes ($n=10$; 5.65%), not addressing school conditions ($n=9$; 5.08%) and inapplicability in Kars conditions ($n=8$; 4.52%). In addition, one of them specifically raised the issue of language problem. At this point, a participant (#159) emphasized that instructional methods should have been flexible with respect to Kars conditions and another participant (#18) suggested about this issue as:

It will be much better if Kars conditions or anywhere students lived are considered. Learning through experience is more permanent, besides we have problems in explaining goals to students. Because students' previous learning is not in harmony with what they have been learning.

The quotation above indicates that appropriateness to local conditions is significant in making it appropriate to students' real lives.

Among the participants who indicated appropriateness to Kars conditions, one of them (#16) specifically mentioned that students could not answer questions by

writing, although they could answer them through speaking; s/he added that the reason of this was the language problem.

About appropriateness to schools' conditions, a participant (#126) said that problems were lived during implementation of curriculum in every region and school conditions must have been considered before hand. Moreover, one another participant (#77) stated that:

We continue with classical methods. We cannot lead our students to make research in our school's region. Because they do not have chance to find enough materials and a part of the curriculum is missed in this situation. Besides our school does not have a gym, library, science and computer laboratory. That is to say, our school is not appropriate to new curriculum.

School conditions are raised with the quotation above and the participant (#77) emphasized that it was not possible to apply instructional methods in their schools.

While others stated that there was not parental involvement in educational process ($n=5$; 2.82%) and specifically some of them raised the issue of parents' indifference ($n=4$; 2.26%) and only of the teachers found instructional methods were not appropriate to parents' expectations (.56%) (Table 39). A participant (#171) stated about parental involvement to educational process as they had problems during implementation of curriculum due to the fact that there was a lack of parental support and another one (#118) mentioned that teachers had been living problems derived from parents and students during implementation of curriculum.

Table 39

Miscellaneous Negative Perceptions in Instructional Methods Dimension

Codes	n
High number of students in class	10
Not address school conditions	9
Not applicable in Kars conditions (e.g. language problem, 1)	8
No parental involvement in educational process (e.g. parents' indifference, 4)	5
Not appropriate to parents' expectations	1

Classroom teachers' both positive and negative perceptions about the resources dimension of the new elementary school curriculum were also asked along with the instructional methods dimension. The results are explained the next part.

4.2.4. Classroom Teachers' Perceptions about Resources of the New Elementary School Curriculum

Resources are generally tools for assisting learning. The section shares the results of classroom teachers' positive and negative perceptions about resource dimension of the new elementary school curriculum. Two themes derived from teachers' positive and negative perceptions about resources; *qualification* and *miscellaneous ones*. Positive and negative perceptions of classroom teachers are summarized in the proceeding parts respectively.

4.2.4.1. Classroom Teachers' Positive Perceptions about Resources of the New Elementary School Curriculum

The results of classroom teachers' positive perceptions about resources of the new elementary school curriculum are summarized in this section. From the answers gathered two themes were emerged, these were *qualification* and *miscellaneous ones*, and given in Table 40 and 41 in frequencies.

Under the *qualification* theme, nearly half of the classroom teachers stated that there was a variety in resources ($n=78$; 44.07%) as seen in Table 40. A participant (#139) stated as the resources were enhancing visuality as "Visuality in books is good for taking attention of students. And exercises in textbooks are also helpful for students."

Table 40

Positive Perceptions about Qualification in Resources Dimension

Codes	n
Variety of resources	78
Enhances visuality	8
Reinforces learning	6
Reinforces ICT usage	4
Considers individual differences	4
Useful	3
Appropriate to students' level	2
Attractive	1
Up-to-date	1
International qualities	1
Increases motivation in students	1
Encourages collaboration between students	1

Some of the teachers' positive perceptions in resource dimension are given as *miscellaneous ones* in Table 41 in frequencies. A number of classroom teachers stated that resources were accessible in Kars ($n=19$; 10.73%), and text books ($n=14$; 7.91%) and teachers' books ($n=9$; 5.08%) were appropriate, too. Few participants also mentioned material support by the State ($n=8$; 4.52%) and teachers' role ($n=2$; 1.13%) specifically in choosing materials as positive perceptions.

Table 41

Miscellaneous Positive Perceptions in Resources Dimension

Codes	n
Accessibility in Kars	19
Appropriateness of text books	14
Appropriateness of teachers' book	9
Material support by the State	8
Teachers' role (e.g. chance to choose materials, 1)	2

In addition to classroom teachers' positive perceptions about resources dimension of the new elementary school curriculum, there were negative perceptions cited by the classroom teachers, too. These negative perceptions are presented in the next part.

4.2.4.2. Classroom Teachers' Negative Perceptions about Resources of the New Elementary School Curriculum

This part presents negative perceptions about resources of the new elementary school curriculum; two themes were also derived from classroom teachers' perceptions; *qualification* and *miscellaneous ones*. These are presented in Table 42 and 43 in frequencies.

Under *qualification* theme as seen in Table 42, a small number of classroom teachers mentioned that resources were not appropriate to students' level ($n=9$; 5.08%). A participant (#105) stated that teaching and learning were away from scientific knowledge. Textbooks' content was empty and another participant (#152) gave a suggestion about this issue as "Topics should engage students for more thinking. Local music should also be included in textbooks."

Besides including local issues (music) into the textbooks, another suggestion was made by a participant (#70) about the same issue was "Textbooks should have bigger fonts. And there are not enough grammar topics. My colleagues have problems in these issues. There should be much topics regarding grammar."

Thus, the participant (#70) emphasized that there were problems with the content of the textbooks, such as their fonts and grammar topics.

Table 42

Negative Perceptions about Qualification in Resources Dimension

Codes	n
Not appropriate to students' level	9
Not relevant with students' everyday life	2
Not up-to-date	2
Not attractive	1

Another theme emerged was *miscellaneous ones* and Table 43 summarizes these negative perceptions. A few number of the classroom teachers stated that resources were prepared without considering Kars conditions ($n=16$; 9.04%) and school conditions ($n=15$; 8.47%). A participant (#11) highlighted about the appropriateness to school conditions as curriculum was appropriate for schools which had enough

resources and stationary things, and another participant (#163) emphasized that recommended resources and materials were well but they did not have those possibilities in their schools. Another participant (#122) exemplified this issue as:

Although our school is an urban one, it does not have enough resources. We do not have any library or computer laboratory. We have only two computers. We cannot even write to our black boards. Materials in science laboratory are too old. And we try to buy books to students at the beginning of every semester.

A suggestion made by a participant (#122) about appropriateness to Kars conditions was as follows:

We try to apply curriculum somehow under Kars conditions. While the preparation of new curriculum, schools in eastern part were not considered. What schools have is lack of resources! At first school conditions should be improved.

Another participant (#124), in addition, emphasized appropriateness to Kars and school conditions as “I personally believe that these are lived all over the country not just in Kars. Before the preparation of curriculum all over the country, school conditions must have been improved.” As seen from the quotation, the participant (#124) believed the problems lived about resources were common all over the country.

While a small number of others emphasized that resources were not appropriate to parents’ conditions ($n=8$; 4.52%) as seen in Table 43. A participant (#177) emphasized the parents’ conditions as parents’ economical situations and not being educated were other problems, and another one (#176) mentioned that parents’ economical situations were not good in Kars. Only one participant cited the high number of students in class (.56%) as a negative perception.

Table 43

Miscellaneous Negative Perceptions in Resources Dimension

Codes	n
Not consider Kars conditions	16
Not consider school conditions (e.g. physical, 5; equipment, materials, 1)	15
Not appropriate to parents’ conditions (e.g. economical, 7; social status, 1)	8
High number of students in class	1

Until this point, perceptions about four dimensions (Objectives, content, instructional methods, and resources) of the new elementary school curriculum are summarized in detail. The perceptions about the last dimension of the curriculum, assessment and evaluation, is covered in the next part.

4.2.5. Classroom Teachers' Perceptions about Assessment and Evaluation of the New Elementary School Curriculum

Assessment and evaluation dimension of the curriculum is about whether or not the objectives are being met. This section presents the classroom teachers' positive and negative perceptions in assessment and evaluation dimension of the new elementary school curriculum. According to their responses two themes were derived about assessment and evaluation, these were *format* and *miscellaneous ones*. In the proceeding sections, positive and negative perceptions of classroom teachers about the assessment and evaluation dimension of the new elementary school curriculum are explained respectively.

4.2.5.1. Classroom Teachers' Positive Perceptions about Assessment and Evaluation of the New Elementary School Curriculum

This section includes the results of classroom teachers' positive perceptions about assessment and evaluation under two themes; *format* and *miscellaneous ones*. The responses are given under *format* theme in Table 44 in frequencies.

Under *format* theme, almost a quarter of the classroom teachers mentioned that there was a variety in techniques ($n=45$; 25.42%) and one of them specifically stated that techniques were modern (.56%) and three of them stated that there was enough methods (1.69%) as in Table 44. Among the other perceptions under *format* of assessment and evaluation theme, being process oriented ($n=14$; 7.91%) and enhancing learning ($n=13$; 7.34%) were other issues cited by classroom teachers.

Table 44

Positive Perceptions about Format in Assessment and Evaluation Dimension

Codes	n
Variety in techniques (e.g. enough methods, 3; modern techniques, 1)	45
Process oriented	14
Enhances learning (e.g. self evaluation, 4; leading research, 2; determining students' interest, 2; increasing motivation, 1; visuality, 1)	13
Appropriate to students' level (e.g. developmental level, 1)	9
Emphasis on active learning (e.g. student-centered, 2; encouraging to work with others, 1)	8
Considers individual differences (e.g. previous learning, 1)	6
Comprehensive (e.g. assesses all behaviors, 5)	6

There were also positive perceptions about assessment and evaluation dimension that were not put into above theme and named as *miscellaneous ones* as in Table 45. A few amount of the classroom teachers raised the issue of assessment and evaluation methods' appropriateness to students' everyday life ($n=2$; 1.13%) and one specifically said they helped students in preparing to life of Kars (.56%) (Table 45). The other two emphasized that assessment and evaluation methods helping teachers (1.13%).

Table 45

Miscellaneous Positive Perceptions in Assessment and Evaluation Dimension

Codes	n
Appropriate to students' everyday life (e.g. preparing to life conditions of Kars, 1)	2
Helping teachers	2

Along with positive perceptions about assessment and evaluation dimension of the new elementary school curriculum, there are still negative perceptions and these were covered in the following part.

4.2.5.2. Classroom Teachers' Negative Perceptions about Assessment and Evaluation of the New Elementary School Curriculum

This part insists on the classroom teachers' negative perceptions about assessment and evaluation dimension of the new elementary school curriculum. The negative perceptions about assessment and evaluation dimension are given under *format* and *miscellaneous ones* themes.

Under *format* theme, the classroom teachers expressed their negative perceptions about assessment and evaluation dimension and presented in Table 46. Almost one fifth of the classroom teachers mentioned that application of the assessment and evaluation methods took time ($n=31$; 17.51%) and a small number of them found them costly ($n=13$; 7.34%) as in Table 46. A participant (#109) stated about this issue as it was too difficult to apply observation forms.

Table 46

Negative Perceptions about Format in Assessment and Evaluation Dimension

Codes	n
Takes time	31
Costly	13
Needs too many materials	9
Not consider individual differences	6
Not appropriate to students' level (e.g. developmental level, 1; readiness, 1)	4
Not appropriate to SBS system (Placement test)	3
Not consistent with topics	1

Table 47 presents *miscellaneous* negative perceptions about assessment and evaluation dimension that were not put under above theme. A few number of the classroom teachers raised the issue that assessment and evaluation process did not increase parental involvement in educational process ($n=9$; 5.08%) as shown in Table 47. At this point, a participant mentioned (#41) that parents were indifferent to their children in supporting them through assessment, at least with their thoughts.

A participant (#169) mentioned the applicability in Kars conditions as curriculum should have been prepared through consideration of local differences and alleged that it was not possible to observe the same success from students in rural and urban regions. Another participant (#66) accounted for this problem as homework could not reach its goals due to local conditions, because students could not find necessary resources.

A few of the participants also cited language problem ($n=2$; 1.13%), found not appropriate to parents' expectation ($n=1$; .56%), and thought that assessment and evaluation dimension did not consider society's general needs ($n=1$; .56%).

Table 47

Miscellaneous Negative Perceptions in Assessment and Evaluation Dimension

Codes	n
No parental involvement in educational process (e.g. parents' doing homework, 6; unwillingness, 1; support, 1; parents' indifference, 1)	9
Not applicable in Kars conditions	4
Language problem	2
Not appropriate to parents' expectation	1
Not consider society's general needs	1

Previous sections include participant classroom teachers' perceptions about five dimensions (Objectives, content, instructional methods, resources, and assessment and evaluation) of the new elementary school curriculum. Besides the positive perceptions, classroom teachers also mentioned their negative perceptions about these five dimensions. Classroom teachers were also asked their suggestions for overcoming their negative perceptions; these are covered in the next section.

4.2.6. Suggestions of Classroom Teachers for Overcoming Negative Perceptions about the New Elementary School Curriculum

This section includes classroom teachers' suggestions for overcoming their own negative perceptions about five dimensions of curriculum (Objectives, content, resources, instructional methods, and assessment and evaluation). Their answers are given under six themes; *suggestions about teachers*, *suggestion about appropriateness to region / local*, *suggestions with regard to parents' involvement to educational process*, *suggestions about schools*, *suggestions about students* and *miscellaneous suggestions*.

First theme emerged was *suggestions about teachers*, Table 48 below presents classroom teachers' suggestions about teachers themselves in frequencies. A few number of the suggestions regarding teachers themselves, participant classroom teachers alleged to support teachers ($n=8$; 4.52%) through increasing their motivation ($n=1$; .56%), increasing authority of teachers ($n=2$; 1.13%) and taking teachers' suggestions ($n=4$; 2.26%) (Table 48). There were also issues regarding increasing number of teachers ($n=4$; 2.26%) and self development opportunities of teachers ($n=3$; 1.69%). Only a few thought that quality of teachers' education had to

be increased ($n=2$; 1.13%) besides increasing the self efforts of teachers ($n=1$; .56%).

Table 48

Suggestions about Teachers

Codes	n
Supporting teachers (e.g. taking teachers' suggestions, 4; increasing authority of teachers, 2; increasing motivation, 1)	8
Increasing number of teachers (e.g. guidance teachers, 2; branch teachers, 1)	4
Increasing self-development opportunities of teachers	3
Increasing quality of teachers' education	2
More self efforts of teachers	1

The next theme emerged was *suggestions about appropriateness to region / local* theme and presented in Table 49 in frequencies. Among the *suggestions about appropriateness to region / local*, nearly a quarter of the classroom teachers stated that elementary school curriculum needed to address Kars' conditions ($n=44$; 24.86%) and some specifically raised the issues as; economic conditions ($n=6$; 3.39%), appropriateness of lesson materials, books to region ($n=4$; 2.26%), and geographical conditions ($n=1$; .56%). A participant (#16), at this point, summarized this issue as “ I personally think that due to difficulties realized as a result of region, villages, economical conditions, etc. other negative conditions by teachers, there should be and must be monetary and spiritual support to these regions.”

Other one (#117) mentioned that Kars was one of the poorest cities in Turkey and implementation of curriculum necessitates using ICT, due to this there was need for an economical support schools in Kars Province.

A participant (#159) alleged the flexibility of curriculum and suggested that according to curriculum's goals and vision, there should be a flexible curriculum with respect to regional conditions.

Along with these suggestions stated above, few participants suggested a more flexible curriculum according to local conditions ($n=2$; 1.13%), on the other hand, one of the participants emphasized having national values ($n=1$; .56%).

Table 49

Suggestions about Appropriateness to Region / Local

Codes	n
Needs to address Kars' conditions (e.g. economic, 6; appropriateness of lesson materials, books to region, 4; geographical, 1)	44
Increasing relevancy with students' everyday life	6
Need analysis studies before curriculum changes (e.g. society's needs, 1)	4
Considering local differences	3
Addressing Turkey's conditions	2
More flexible curriculum according to local conditions	2
Having national values	1
Appropriateness to international culture	1

There are also *suggestions with regard to parents' involvement to educational process* as seen in Table 50 below in frequencies. A number of the classroom teachers raised the need for more involvement of parents to educational process ($n=17$; 9.60%) and some specifically stated that this could be realized through informing parents' about new curriculum ($n=7$; 3.95%), raising consciousness tasks ($n=4$; 2.26%), increasing school-parent collaboration ($n=3$; 1.69%), increasing parent support ($n=1$; .56%), preventing doing homework done by parents ($n=1$; .56%), and increasing parents' concerns about their children ($n=1$; .56%).

Table 50

Suggestions with regard to Parents' Involvement to Educational Process

Codes	n
Informing parents' about new curriculum	7
Raising conscious tasks	4
School-parent collaboration	3
Parent support	1
Preventing doing homework done by parents	1
Parents' concerning about their children	1

The next theme emerged was *suggestions about students*. There were also suggestions regarding students in Table 51. Classroom teachers' suggestions regarding students were frequently on considering students' level ($n=13$, 7.34%), one specifically expressed the appropriateness of textbooks to students ($n=1$; .56%). Two of them stated increasing student motivation (1.13%); specifically one stated this could be done through arousing curiosity.

Table 51

Suggestions about Students

Codes	n
Considering students' level (e.g. appropriateness of textbooks to students, 1)	13
Increasing student motivation (e.g. arousing curiosity, 1)	2

Suggestion about schools was the next theme derived from answers of classroom teachers. Some classroom teachers' suggestions about schools are shown in Table 52 in frequencies. Nearly a quarter of the classroom teachers participated to this study emphasized improving school conditions ($n=42$; 23.73%) and some of them specifically stated material support ($n=25$; 14.12%), economical support ($n=1$; .56%) and improving physical conditions of their school ($n=1$; .56%) (Table 52). The few others, on the other hand, raised the issue of decreasing number of students in their classes ($n=11$; 6.21%) as a suggestion. A participant (#47) elaborated this issue with there was a high number students in her / his class and there should be amends for missed lessons and flunk legislation.

Table 52

Suggestions about Schools

Codes	n
Improving school conditions (e.g. material support, 25; physical conditions, 1; economical support, 1)	42
Decreasing number of students in class	11

The following Table 53 presents classroom teachers' suggestions that were not put into other themes mentioned above and mentioned as *miscellaneous*. A small number of the classroom teachers stated that the content of the curriculum should have been enriched ($n=12$; 6.78%) through attractive activities ($n=1$; .56%), including more information ($n=4$; 2.26%), including appropriate activities for the subjects ($n=3$; 1.69%) and decreasing rote learning ($n=1$; .56%) as seen in Table 53 below. Only two of the participant classroom teachers suggested re-revising the curriculum (1.13%) and making the curriculum appropriate to parents' economical conditions.

Table 53

Miscellaneous Suggestions

Codes	n
Enriching the content of curriculum (e.g. more information, 4; appropriate activities for the subjects, 3; attractive activities, 1; no rote learning, 1)	12
Increasing practical assessment and evaluation methods	6
Increasing time allocated to subjects (not finish related topics on time)	4
Re-revising the curriculum	2
Appropriateness to parents' economical conditions	1

Under six themes (Suggestions about teachers, suggestions about appropriateness to region / local, suggestions with regard to parents' involvement to educational process, suggestions about schools, and suggestions about students besides the miscellaneous ones), classroom teachers' suggestions for overcoming their negative perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum are presented in this section. In the following sections, both students' and classroom teachers' additional regional needs under Kars characteristics from the perspective of classroom teachers are tried to be summarized in detail.

4.2.7. Additional Regional Needs of Students about the New Elementary School Curriculum

This section covers classroom teachers' perceptions about additional regional needs of students about the new elementary school curriculum under Kars local characteristics and needs. Classroom teachers are asked about their students' additional regional needs for implementation of elementary school curriculum in Kars Province. Four themes were derived from data gathered and these themes were; *format of curriculum*, *scope of curriculum*, *social/cultural issues* and *miscellaneous ones*.

Table 54 presents classroom teachers' perceptions under *format of curriculum* theme in frequencies. When the classroom teachers' perceptions regarding needs about *format of curriculum* were analyzed, a few number of the classroom teachers emphasized appropriateness to parents' conditions ($n=24$; 13.56%) and increasing parents' involvement to educational process ($n=22$; 12.43%) as seen in Table 54

below. Some of the participants specifically exemplified parents' involvement through increasing parents' support ($n=7$; 3.95%), school-parent collaboration ($n=1$; .56%), raising parents' conscious about educational process ($n=6$; 3.39%) and increasing parents' concerns ($n=8$; 4.52%) as in Table 54.

Table 54

Needs about Format of Curriculum

Codes	n
Appropriateness to parents' conditions (e.g. economical, 21; cultural, 3)	24
Increasing parents' involvement to educational process (e.g. increasing parents' concern, 8; increasing parents' support, 7; raising parents' conscious about educational process, 6; increasing school-parent collaboration, 1)	22
Appropriateness to students' level	6

The next theme derived was *scope of curriculum* and Table 55 summarizes classroom teachers' perceptions in frequencies. Half of the participant classroom teachers expressed that *scope of curriculum* should have addressed Kars conditions ($n=95$; 53.67%) and some specifically mentioned through economical ($n=40$; 22.60%), climate ($n=4$; 2.26%), cultural ($n=9$; 5.08%) and geographical ($n=7$; 3.95%) conditions as seen in Table 55 below. Only a small number of classroom teachers cited flexible curriculum ($n=3$; 1.69%) as a need and two of them specifically mentioned providing flexible curriculum through including local activities ($n=2$; 1.13%).

Table 55

Needs about Scope of Curriculum

Codes	n
Addressing Kars conditions (e.g. economical, 40; cultural, 9; geographical, 7; climate, 4)	95
Relevancy with students' everyday life	6
Flexible curriculum (e.g. including local activities, 2)	3

Table 56 below presents needs that were put under *social / cultural issues* theme in frequencies. The mostly mentioned need under *social / cultural issues* theme was language problem ($n=27$; 15.25%). However, only a small number of them emphasized nutrition problem ($n=2$; 1.13%), home conditions ($n=1$; .56%),

changing parents' view of school as a help center ($n=1$; .56%) and parents' concerns about education's benefits to their children ($n=1$; .56%).

A participant (#137), who stated language as an additional regional student need, added that:

Another problem has been lived about language. You have to teach children at first Turkish (that is to say speaking), because their mother tongue is Kurdish. You try to teach reading and writing in Turkish to Kurdish speaking children. It is too difficult. Especially explaining and trying to help children comprehend idioms and proverbs are quite difficult.

Thus, the quotation indicates that there are students who do not know Turkish language and as a result it is too hard to explain some Turkish sayings like idioms and proverbs to students whose mother tongue is Kurdish language.

Table 56

Needs about Social / Cultural Issues

Codes	n
Language problem	27
Nutrition problem	2
Home conditions (no place for studying)	2
Changing parents' view of school as a help center	1
Concerns about education's benefits to children	1

As seen in Table 57 below, there were students' other additional regional needs that were not put into above themes and named as *miscellaneous* ones. Almost one fifth of the classroom teachers mentioned that improving school conditions ($n=31$; 17.51%) was needed. On the other hand, a few number of classroom teachers highlighted educated parents ($n=5$; 2.82%), increasing after school social activities ($n=4$; 2.26%), more experienced teachers ($n=1$; .56%), need for preschool education ($n=1$; .56%), decreasing number of students' in class ($n=1$; .56%), increasing teacher proficiencies ($n=1$; .56%) and appropriate investments to education ($n=1$; .56%).

Table 57

Miscellaneous Needs

Codes	n
Improving school conditions (e.g. materials, 14; physical conditions, 6; cleanliness, 1)	31
More educated parents	5
After school social activities	4
More experienced teachers	1
Need for preschool education	1
Decreasing number of students' in class	1
Increasing teacher proficiencies	1
Appropriate investments to education	1

In this section classroom teachers' perceptions about additional needs of students about the new elementary school curriculum in Kars Province are summarized and in the proceeding part classroom teachers' own additional regional needs are shared in detail.

4.2.8. Additional Regional Needs of Classroom Teachers about the New Elementary School Curriculum

This part is sought to present classroom teachers' perceptions about additional regional needs of classroom teachers about the new elementary school curriculum in Kars conditions. When classroom teachers were asked to state teachers' additional regional needs for implementation of the new elementary school curriculum in Kars, three themes were derived from data and these themes were; *scope of curriculum*, *format of curriculum* and *miscellaneous ones*. Classroom teachers participated expressed their additional regional needs about the new elementary school curriculum are presented in Table 58 through 60.

Under *scope of curriculum* theme, more than a quarter of the classroom teachers mentioned that curriculum should have addressed Kars conditions ($n=54$; 30.51%) and some of them specifically stated addressing economical ($n=31$; 17.51%), climate ($n=9$; 5.08%), geographical ($n=4$; 2.26%), cultural conditions ($n=3$; 1.69%) and difficulty in working under these conditions ($n=1$; .56%) as in Table 58 below. Only two of the participants, on the other hand, highlighted the issue of not having local content ($n=2$; 1.13%) as a need.

Table 58

Needs about Scope of Curriculum

Codes	n
Addressing Kars conditions (e.g. economical, 31; climate, 9; geographical, 4; cultural, 3; difficult to work, 1)	54
Increasing relevancy with students' everyday life	5
Not having local content (e.g. no local program,1)	2
Improving the content of the curriculum (e.g. attractive curriculum, 1; more information about topics, 1)	2

The next theme emerged was *format of curriculum*, Table 59 below presents teachers' own additional regional needs under this theme in frequencies. Involvement of parents to educational process ($n=19$; 10.73%) was mentioned by a few number of the classroom teachers. Only a few cited that there was a need to a flexible curriculum ($n=2$; 1.13%).

Table 59

Needs about Format of Curriculum

Codes	n
Involvement of parents to educational process (e.g. parent support, 5; school parent collaboration, 1; informing parents about new curriculum, 6; understanding the importance of education, 3; conscious raising tasks, 2)	19
Flexible curriculum (e.g. hard to apply,1)	2

The last theme derived was the *miscellaneous ones*. Under this theme, nearly half of the classroom teachers alleged that teachers' needs were improving their schools' conditions ($n=78$; 44.07%) as in Table 60 below. Some of them specifically mentioned improving school conditions through increasing materials ($n=48$; 27.12%), improving physical conditions ($n=29$; 16.38%), and providing cleanliness in schools ($n=1$; .56%). Language problem ($n=14$; 7.91%) was also mentioned by a number of participant classroom teachers as seen in Table 60 below. There were also issues stated rarely by classroom teachers; such as adjustment to local conditions seminar ($n=1$; .56%), improving teachers' education ($n=1$; .56%), east compensation for teachers ($n=1$; .56%) and increasing guidance to teachers about curriculum ($n=1$; .56%).

Table 60

Miscellaneous Needs

Codes	n
Improving school conditions (e.g. more materials, 48; physical conditions, 29; cleanliness, 1)	78
Language problem	14
Increasing number of teachers (e.g. guidance teachers, 1; branch teachers, 1; teachers' high working load, 1)	4
Decreasing number of students in class	2
Adjustment to local conditions seminar for teachers	1
Improving teachers' education	1
East compensation should be given to teachers	1
More guidance to teachers about curriculum	1

Up to this point, both demographic data of classroom teachers and teacher educators, and qualitative data about research questions gathered from classroom teachers are shared in detail. In the following parts, qualitative data gathered through semi structured interview forms from teacher educators based on research questions are presented in detail.

4.3. Teacher Educators' Perceptions about the New Elementary School Curriculum

This section is sought to focus on the perceptions of teacher educators about the new elementary school curriculum. Teacher educators' perceptions were taken about the strengths and weaknesses about the new elementary school curriculum, and its implementation in general and Kars conditions. Data analysis of semi structured interviews emerged into five dimensions of curriculum; *objectives, content, instructional methods, resources* and *assessment and evaluation* (Both the strengths and weaknesses of curriculum). Moreover, needs of classroom teachers in Kars for implementation of the new elementary school curriculum was evaluated from the perspectives of participant teacher educators. These topics are shared in proceeding parts respectively.

4.3.1. Teacher Educators' Mentorship Status

This section exhibits teacher educators' mentorship status during 2008 – 2009 academic year. Teacher were asked if they were mentors in “teaching experience course” during 2008-2009 academic year, and five of them answered this question as they were mentors in this course while one of them stated that s/he was not a mentor in teaching experience course.

When teacher educators were asked about in what ways they helped prospective teachers during “teaching experience courses,” half of them (TE-2, TE-3 and TE-5) answered this question as they applied the program defined by Higher Education Council. TE-3 and TE-2 added that they also tried to help their students in solving problems in their training schools. The other one (TE-2) clarified that the things they realized during “teaching experience courses” as he applied the teacher education program defined by Higher Education Council, and added that:

Additionally I try to teach my students the aims and goals of the national education, because in Turkey there is a problem about not knowing the aims and goals of anything they are doing. People do something or learn to do something, but they do not know why they are doing so. They ignore or are unaware of this. Due to these, I try to help students to learn aims and goals of national education, to help them to think what, why and how questions during teaching experience course.

As understood from the quotation, TE-2 gave importance to teaching national education aims and goals and he wanted prospective teachers to know them. In addition, only two of them (TE-4 and TE-6) specified the activities they realized as they wanted students to prepare weekly reports and helped them prepare these reports, too.

4.3.2. Teacher Educators' Perceptions about the New Elementary School Curriculum in General and in Kars Conditions

In this section, participant teacher educators' perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum including both the strengths and weaknesses while implementation of the new elementary school curriculum in general and in Kars conditions are presented.

Strengths while Implementation: Teacher educators were asked to express their perceptions about the strengths of the new elementary school curriculum in general and in Kars conditions, their statements indicated that the strengths both in general and in Kars conditions resulted in three themes: *format of curriculum*, *social / cultural issues* and *miscellaneous* ones, and their perceptions were found as follows:

Format of curriculum: Under *format of curriculum* theme, there were two issues emerged; philosophy behind the curriculum and flexibility of the curriculum. Firstly, all the participant teacher educators stated that philosophy behind the curriculum was very strong; constructivism, student centeredness, interdisciplinary approach, etc. TE-1 and TE-5 specifically stated that Vygotsky's social learning theory, Piaget's thoughts were positive issues and it had also an interdisciplinary approach which was well. Thus, these participants gave emphasis on social context of learning. Moreover, TE-3 mentioned that philosophy behind the curriculum was strong and advocated that nobody could be against student centeredness and learning by doing.

In the second place, two of the participants (TE-1 and TE-4) raised the issue of the flexibility of curriculum with respect to conditions, and TE-1 emphasized that:

Curriculum does not mean to be used literally. Teachers should provide this flexibility, that is to say; teachers can provide flexibility with respect to climate conditions, school conditions, child's conditions, and parents' conditions. Curriculum gives guidelines and includes objectives. Teachers have to use their professionalism, but teachers are not aware of this flexibility.

In the quotation above, TE-1 believed that the new elementary school curriculum provided flexibility for teachers; she mentioned that unfortunately teachers did not know this flexibility with respect to different conditions and applied what was in textbooks, even they were not appropriate to local's and children's conditions.

Social / cultural issues: Teachers' being novel to profession and Kars ethnic diversity were two issues emerged under *social / cultural issues* theme. At first, TE-3 stated that teachers being novel to profession was an advantage, for instance teachers in Kars were generally novel to profession and according to him these teachers' knowledge about new curriculum was so recent. Secondly, he (TE-3) also

mentioned Kars conditions from a cultural perspective as an advantage and elaborated this as:

Kars' ethnic structure and cultural diversity are other advantages to curriculum. I think so, because this curriculum aims achieving this diversity. Besides, due to this characteristic of Kars I think it must have been chosen for pilot study.

Thereby, TE-3 emphasized that cultural diversity issue was given importance in the new elementary school curriculum and he believed that due to Kars' cultural characteristic Kars Province could be included in the pilot study of the new elementary school curriculum realized in 2004-2005 academic year.

Miscellaneous: There was an issue not included in the previous themes and evaluated under *miscellaneous* theme; curriculum change. There are more than half of the participants (TE-2, TE-3, TE-5 and TE-6) considered the idea of change in elementary school curriculum positive. For instance, TE-6 mentioned that "Since my undergraduate years all my teachers had a consensus in one thing which is curriculum in Turkey is centralized. Due to this, it must be changed. It does not consider up-to-date needs of society." Thus, he thought that centralized curriculum planning was realized in Turkey and curriculum should have been changed; as a result needs of the society was not considered.

Besides, TE-3 summarized his perception about change in curriculum with a doubt as "If you ask me "Should the curriculum be changed?" I can absolutely say that behaviorist approach must have been changed. But we have to understand what must have been exactly changed." As understood from the quotation, change in philosophical understanding in the curriculum was necessary, however, he (TE-3) had some doubts about other issues that he did not clarify. Moreover, the other one (TE-2) stated that he found updating curriculum practices valuable.

Weaknesses while Implementation: When teacher educators were asked to express their perceptions about the weaknesses while implementation of the new elementary school curriculum in general and in Kars conditions, teacher educators' statements indicated two themes: *format of curriculum* and *social / cultural issues*, and their perceptions were found as follows:

Format of curriculum: Two issues emerged under *format of curriculum* theme; philosophy behind the curriculum and teachers' implementation of the curriculum. At first, TE-2 raised the issue that there were negative sides about the *format of curriculum* and he was wary of the philosophy behind the curriculum and elaborated this as:

Constructivism has both advantages and disadvantages. I think that every method and approach is like a drug. It helps to solve urgent aches, but it has also adverse effect. That is to say, it gives harm to some parts of your body, constructivism is also like that. It is important to solve urgent things. Besides, I am not against student centeredness.

Thereby, TE-2 had some doubts about constructivism and believed that it would cause some problems in the future. However, TE-2 indicated that he was not against student centeredness.

Secondly, two of the participants (TE-1 and TE-4) emphasized that theoretically curriculum prepared was good but they found its implementation argumentative. Another participants (TE-3 and TE-5) stated that the teachers did not know the curriculum, philosophy behind it. Thus, implementation of the new elementary school curriculum could be problematic from their perspectives.

Social / cultural issues: There were some other issues mentioned by participant teacher educators about nation states, Kars conditions, teachers and parents dimensions; these are presented under *social / cultural issues* theme. Firstly, TE-2 raised the issue that during curriculum development process there should be a national perspective, if it was not looked from this perspective, it was not possible to address country's needs. He also mentioned that looking from the window of own culture was important, he added that educational systems should be national, and the rational one according to him was that every country had to apply a curriculum which considered its own needs from the perspective of its culture. He also summarized his thoughts as:

You have to make people in Posof, Ardahan, Edirne, Milas, Sivas and Hekimhan be a Turkish citizen. They learn to be locals of the place they live. They have the characteristic of their ethnic background, religion, cult and local culture. But we have to help them be a Turkish citizen. All the countries try to do this. And it must be like that, too. These all indicate that

especially elementary school curriculum must be appropriate with nation state ideology. The thing that integrates people in Posof, Gürün, Hekimhan and Şirnak is the common curriculum. When you apply the common curriculum, you can provide this.

This quotation shows that he also gave importance to citizenship education through a common national curriculum; he was against including local characteristics and believed that national alliance could be destroyed if there was not a common curriculum. TE-2 also mentioned that curriculum had to have a nationality emphasis, it should not object to local characteristics but they should not have been on the front.

Secondly, parental situations were thought to be the other problem raised by teacher educators; (TE-1, TE-3 and TE-5) specifically mentioned that parents were not conscious about curriculum in use and some parents' economical conditions in Kars were not good to support their children. A participant (TE-3) emphasized parental issues with the idea that:

Parents in Kars are not role model to their children. From my observation, I can say that parents do not support their children. And teachers' complaints are mostly based on this. Some other parents do their children homework on their own. This is a big problem, too. Not supporting their children can be changed into an advantage in this situation. If they do not know, they won't do their children's homework.

The quotation above indicates that parents' being role model to their children was a significant. However, in Kars parents were not aware of the responsibilities defined in the new elementary school curriculum for them; some parents did not help their children in their education while some others thought that they helped their children through doing their homework. TE-1 stated the issues related to parents and summarized her thoughts with:

Parents are not conscious about curriculum in use. However, parents have more responsibilities. But in implementation, our research shows that parents understand this responsibility as doing their children's homework, projects and portfolios. Unfortunately they did not realize this problem.

Along with teachers' responsibilities, there are problems about parents' responsibilities in implementation of the curriculum; parents understood their responsibility as doing their children's homework.

The last issue is presented under teacher dimension. A participant (TE-2) stated that he thought that this curriculum was an unsuccessful practice and the reasons behind his thought were that some approaches were not known by teachers in Kars, the teachers in Kars were not experienced and there were also some other problems related with crowded classrooms in Kars. He mentioned about these issues as:

The most important problem in Kars is that teachers do not know what student centeredness means. Other problem in Kars conditions is that teachers in Kars are generally teachers who are novel to profession and do not have experience. It has both advantages and disadvantages.

As understood from the quotation, TE-2 had some doubts about teachers' knowledge about curriculum, but he believed that this had both advantages and disadvantages. These advantages and disadvantages mentioned by him were:

An advantage is that these teachers' (novice teachers) knowledge is more up-to-date, maybe they know constructivism due to their recent graduation, but, on the other hand, teachers have many other problems, too. They do not know how to be a teacher, work in village conditions, work under hard winter conditions, etc. And we also take advantage of communication within teachers about their experiences because old ones do not know new approach. Another problem is crowded classrooms. It is hard to a-p-p-l-y (emphasis) student centered approach in these classes. These two reasons show why it is hard to apply constructivist approach here.

Thus, he believed that having a recent knowledge about philosophy behind the curriculum could be advantageous but on the other hand sharing experiences was decreased within teachers. Since old teachers did not know the new elementary school curriculum in depth and the philosophy behind it, so teachers could not have chance to share their experiences about their implementation of the curriculum. Besides, he highlighted the issue of crowded classrooms as a disadvantage in Kars Province.

Half of the participants (TE-1, TE-3 and TE-4) stated teachers' responsibilities were significant in this curriculum. TE-1 said that:

I think curriculum is applicable in Kars conditions, but teachers have many responsibilities. Teachers have to be prepared when they go to schools. Students have to be exposed to conditions and these conditions should be prepared by teachers. These can be prepared in these school conditions (?), I have some doubts.

Another participant (TE-3) elaborated this issue (teachers' responsibilities) as Kars had a hard winter, making some topics appropriate to that region's characteristics especially in arranging content, and during that process teachers had an important role. TE-1 stated that there were problems derived from teachers and these problems were about teachers' not being related to education field and school. And secondly

Up to this point, teacher educators' perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum in general and in Kars conditions are presented. In the proceeding part, teacher educators' perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum based on five dimensions of curriculum (Objectives, content, instructional methods, resources, assessment and evaluation) are summarized in detail.

4.3.3. Teacher Educators' Perceptions about the New Elementary School Curriculum Based on Five Dimensions of Curriculum

This section presents the results gathered about teacher educators' perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum based on five dimensions of curriculum; objectives, content, instructional methods, resources, and assessment and evaluation. The results are summarized in the proceeding parts respectively.

4.3.3.1. Objectives

Teacher educators' perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum in objectives dimension are presented under *format of objectives* theme.

Format of objectives: Four issues emerged under this theme; attainment of objectives, parents' role, philosophy behind the curriculum, and students' everyday life. Firstly, one third of the participants (TE-1 and TE-4) stated that all the objectives could be attained by students, but TE-4 specifically mentioned this with a condition to be achieved behind her thought:

All the objectives can be attained by students. If the chance to construct knowledge is given to students, it can be achieved. That is to say, if everything is prepared appropriate to philosophy behind the curriculum,

implementation is realized accordingly, then, they can be attained by students.

In the quotation, she believed that philosophy behind the curriculum enabled the students to attain all the objectives. In addition, almost all participant teacher educators (TE-1, TE-3, TE-4, TE-5 and TE-6) mentioned the importance of parental involvement to educational process for attainment of objectives. One of them (TE-1) exemplified this issue with:

There should be a parental support to students for helping them attain these objectives. Child grows up in the family. Of course, construction of objectives in children can only be achieved through parental support. This is unquestionable. Both teachers and parents should guide children.

The quotation indicates that parent' role is also crucial in attainment of objectives and another participant (TE-4) emphasized her thought with the idea that objectives increased the need for parental support, but she also alleged that parents in Kars were not aware of their responsibilities.

All participants emphasized the appropriateness of objectives to students' everyday life. TE-6 mentioned that objectives were determined appropriately with students' everyday life, their everyday problems and how to solve them.

4.3.3.2. Content

Teacher educators' perceptions about content dimension of the new elementary school curriculum are presented under *format of content* theme.

Format of content: Four issues emerged under this theme, these issues were; appropriateness to local conditions / needs, flexibility, preparation to SBS exam (Placement test) and parental support.

Firstly, only TE-3 mentioned that if curriculum was prepared in the center, whatever approach applied (constructivism or behaviorism, etc.) in the curriculum, it would never be appropriate to local conditions and needs.

Two other participants (TE-1 and TE-4) mentioned that the content should have been flexible and TE-1 elaborated this issue with content should have been flexible

and criticizable; besides, it should be appropriate to conditions and teachers should not have only applied the content of guide book.

Another one third of the participants (TE-3 and TE-6) emphasized that the content had not been used for preparation to SBS exam (Placement test). Lastly, parental support under content dimension was raised by only one of the participants (TE-5) he emphasized a condition with “Parental support is of course necessary for achieving necessary objectives and if content is appropriate to students’ real lives, parents support will be increased. This is provided with this curriculum.” Thus, the participant (TE-5) stated that increasing the relevancy between students’ real lives would contribute to increase in parental support about content dimension of the new elementary school curriculum.

4.3.3.3. Instructional Methods

Teacher educators’ perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum in instructional methods dimension are presented under *qualification of instructional methods* theme.

Qualification of instructional methods: Diversifying instructional methods, teachers’ implementation and flexibility issues were derived under this theme. Two of the participants (TE-1 and TE-4) emphasized diversifying each dimension of curriculum and TE-4 specifically said that “Teachers have to diversify methods, instructional methods, content, resources and assessment and evaluation methods with regard to local and regional needs and characteristics.”

Another participant (TE-1) stated about diversifying instructional methods as there were various different methods and she hoped that teachers could apply them. Half of the participant teacher educators (TE-1, TE-5 and TE-6) mentioned their doubts about teachers’ implementation of these instructional methods. TE-6 indicated that “I have some doubts about teachers’ knowledge about the methods; that is to say, I think they may know the methods theoretically, but I am not sure if they can really apply them appropriately.”

TE-1 also highlighted if teachers applied what was in guide books, they contradicted philosophy. Besides, TE-1 stated her thoughts about parental issues with “To me, parents’ cultural background and social level is affecting this instructional process.”

Lastly, flexibility of instructional methods was also emphasized by one third of the participants (TE-1 and TE-4) and one of them (TE-1) stated that:

The new elementary school curriculum considers environmental and regional conditions. Philosophy behind the curriculum provides this. This is one of the strengths of the curriculum. Providing flexibility. There is not a framework which says “use these examples, activities, etc.” There are guide books for teachers but there is flexibility for considering regional characteristics. But teachers are not aware of this flexibility. The teachers who understand the philosophy behind the curriculum can apply flexibility.

As understood from the quotation, philosophy behind the new elementary school curriculum provided flexibility to teachers during application of the curriculum, but as she (TE-1) mentioned teachers preferred or were not knowledgeable about the flexibility characteristic of the new elementary school curriculum.

4.3.3.4. Resources

Teacher educators’ perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum in resources dimension are presented under *qualification of resources* theme.

Qualification of resources: Teachers’ role and availability of resources were emerged under this theme. Half of the participants (TE-1, TE-4 and TE-6) mentioned teachers’ role in enriching resources could be used during instructional process. TE-6 specifically stated that “Teachers only apply what the content of textbooks is and try to finish it on time, but this is not appropriate to constructivism. Teachers should try to enrich resources.”

Local conditions were expressed by three participants (TE-3, T-4 and TE-6) and they stated their suggestions about this issue. TE-3, for instance, said that finding resources was problem in Kars Province and Kars conditions such as geographical, climate should have been considered beforehand. TE-4 also suggested choosing

resources from local things. Lastly, the other one (TE-6) said that “Physical conditions are not appropriately provided by the State and I can say that according to my observations schools here do not have necessary materials. Generally these materials are not bought by parents, too.” Thereby, the participant (TE-6) indicated that local resources should have been used due to lack resources in schools and parents’ economical conditions.

4.3.3.5. Assessment and Evaluation

Teacher educators’ perceptions about the new elementary school curriculum in assessment and evaluation dimension are presented under *format of assessment and evaluation methods* theme.

Format of assessment and evaluation methods: Process oriented assessment and evaluation, parental and teacher related issues were three issues evaluated under this theme. At first half of the participant teacher educators (TE-4, TE-5 and TE-6) mentioned that they thought that process oriented assessment and evaluation was better for monitoring learning.

Secondly, parental issues during assessment and evaluation were mentioned by one third of the participants (TE-1 and TE-6). TE-6 specifically emphasized that:

Generally parents’ educational background is not appropriate to help the application of assessment and evaluation methods. Maybe this can be an advantage, because when they do not know them, they cannot do their children’s homework.

Likewise, TE-1 alleged that parents doing homework was not a parental support. Another participant (TE-4) raised the teacher related issue with the statement that she was not sure about the fact that teachers really comprehended the methods for assessing students’ learning.

4.3.4. Teacher Educators' Perceptions about the Needs of Classroom Teachers in Kars Conditions and Suggestions

This section includes teacher educators' perceptions about the needs of the classroom teachers under Kars conditions and teacher educators' suggestions for providing these needs. For this part, teacher educators were asked to state their perception about classroom teachers' needs in Kars and their suggestions. From the data gathered about needs of classroom teachers under Kars conditions, two themes were derived and these are; *format of the curriculum* and *miscellaneous ones*. These are shared in the proceeding parts respectively.

Format of the curriculum: Two issues emerged under this theme; school principals' role and parents' involvement. Firstly, TE-3 and TE-4 stated that increasing school principals' involvement to educational process was significant and TE-3 specifically stated that:

School principals should also collaborate with teachers during the implementation of curriculum. Without taking the support of principals teachers cannot realize their purposes. Unfortunately, principals do not know their responsibility in curriculum implementation process.

TE-3 emphasized the role of school principals in implementing the new elementary school curriculum in the quotation above. In addition, half of the participants (TE-3, TE-5 and TE-6) mentioned the importance of parents' involvement to educational process through collaboration with parents in implementation of curriculum. As seen from these needs of classroom teachers mentioned by teacher educators, stakeholders of curriculum such as school principals and parents are significant.

Miscellaneous: There were perceptions that were not put into theme mentioned above and named as *miscellaneous* ones. TE-5 stated that class sizes should be decreased and by this way students could be active during the lessons. There were also needs regarding necessary materials for realizing the lessons, this was emphasized by almost all participants (TE-1, TE-3, TE-4, TE-5 and TE-6). TE-4, for instance, stated that teachers needed materials in schools; up to date publications about their profession, electronic things, etc. Moreover, TE-3 mentioned another perspective about needs of teachers with:

What teachers understand from need is concrete materials. For example, when you ask teachers “What do you need for implementation of curriculum?” and “Do you need something to learn about teaching methods?”. Their answer is “No”. “Do you need materials?”. Their answer is “Many”. Of course, they need materials.

Along with these needs, teacher educators were also asked about their suggestions for providing classroom teachers’ needs. From the data gathered about these suggestions, two themes were derived and these themes are *format of curriculum* and *social / cultural issues*. These are shared in the proceeding parts.

Format of curriculum: All of the participant teacher educators stated the importance of teachers’ role during the implementation of curriculum. Suggestions about needs of teachers were given by some teacher educators, for instance, TE-1 suggested the need for an in-service training with:

Teachers at first do not know what curriculum aims and what it wants from them. In-service training is an urgent need. These trainings should not be only given to inspectors or ministry of national education. There should be collaboration with universities. Actually, at first in Kars, we have to clean our own trash.

She elaborated classroom teachers’ need about curriculum, especially teachers who were not majored in education field with:

There are teachers who are not majored in the field. There classroom teachers who were majored in agriculture engineer, for example. Of course there are teachers who realize their profession appropriately, but still there are teachers who must learn some concepts in education. They should take extra in-service trainings realized by Ministry of National Education or universities. Of course, we should not ignore some teachers’ personal struggles.

As understood from two quotations of TE-2 mentioned above, teachers urgently need in-service training about the new elementary school curriculum especially teachers who had majors in other fields other than education.

Half of the teacher educators (TE-1, TE-5 and TE-6) emphasized the guidance for teachers during the implementation of curriculum. Three other participants (TE-1, TE-2 and TE-5) mentioned that guide books were not enough with its content and it was not the true way to help teachers. TE-5, for instance, elaborated this as

“Teachers do not know curriculum and examine it. Most of the teachers choose the simple way. Besides, Ministry of National Education makes the teachers’ work simple by sending guide books to them.” Thus, guidebooks are not enough for helping teachers in implementation of curriculum. TE-2, on the other hand, stated that teachers had become technician in instruction, that is to say, this system made teachers to be appliers of guide books. He also suggested that teachers had to have the responsibility of improving themselves and Ministry of National Education had to send free publications about education like in 50s, 60s and 70s, however, they sent only guide books to teachers.

Social / cultural issues: Two of the participants (TE-2 and TE-6) stated that curriculum was not appropriate to Kars’ educational conditions. TE-6 specifically mentioned that:

Kars is not good at university entrance exam and other entrance exams; this is the failure of educational organizations, not enough in-service training and striving with other socio cultural issues. Not knowing the curriculum is added to these problems. I think that Kars has serious problems and these problems will increase in the future. Many institutions have responsibilities; Directorate and Ministry of National Education, media, universities and unions.

Another participant (TE-1) emphasized teachers’ knowledge about local conditions and suggested that “Teachers should be aware of the conditions of environment they are working. They should be in collaboration with it; know the parents, values, beliefs and attitudes of the environment they are working.” As understood from this quotation, the participant (TE-1) gave importance to teachers’ knowledge about the local conditions they were working, so she suggested teachers knowing the characteristics of the place they are working.

4.4. Summary of the Major Findings

This study is designed to reveal classroom teachers’ perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers face with the new elementary school curriculum and its implementation in Kars Province, and also examines the students’ educational needs and classroom teachers’ needs from the window of

Kars' local characteristics; teacher educators' perceptions about strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers face with regard to implementation of the new elementary school curriculum, and classroom teachers' needs about the new elementary school curriculum. Based on these purposes highly cited findings (cited more than five percent) are shared in the following parts.

In the light of major findings of this study, the perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers confronted while implementation of the new elementary school curriculum in Kars are summarized according to both classroom teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions and besides, classroom teachers' suggestions for overcoming these weaknesses are presented as follows:

1. Classroom teachers perceived the strengths of objectives as follows;
 - Emphasis on active learning (45.76%)
 - Appropriate to students' level (16.95%)
 - Variety in objectives (11.86%)
 - Enhanceable with regard to Kars conditions (10.73%)
 - Comprehensive (5.08%)
2. Classroom teachers perceived the weaknesses of objectives as follows;
 - Not accessible with regard to Kars conditions (25.42%)
 - Inappropriate to the schools' conditions (19.77%)
 - Inappropriate to students' level (6.78%)
3. Teacher educators perceived objectives of the new elementary school curriculum as follows;
 - All the objectives can be attained by students
 - Parental involvement is important in educational process for attainment of objectives
 - Parents in Kars are unaware of their responsibilities
 - Objectives are appropriate to students' everyday life
4. Classroom teachers perceived the strengths of content as follows;
 - Allowing for active learning (24.29%)
 - Comprehensive (19.21%)
 - Relevant to students' everyday life (16.95%)
 - Making education attractive (10.73%)
 - Appropriate to students' level (9.04%)
5. Classroom teachers perceived the weaknesses of content as follows;
 - Not addressing Kars conditions (17.51%)
 - Not comprehensive (14.69%)
 - Inappropriate to students' level (8.47%)
 - Not relevant to students' everyday life (6.21%)
 - Not increasing parental involvement to educational process (5.65%)

6. Teacher educators perceived the content of the new elementary school curriculum as follows;
 - Flexible and considering local conditions
 - Teachers only apply the content of guide books
 - Content must not be used for preparation for SBS exam (Placement test)
 - Parental support is emphasized
7. Classroom teachers perceived the strengths of instructional methods as follows;
 - Variety in methods (54.24%)
 - Emphasis on active learning (27.12%)
8. Classroom teachers perceived the weaknesses of instructional methods as follows;
 - High number of students in classes (5.65%)
 - Not addressing school conditions (5.08%)
9. Teacher educators perceived the instructional methods of the new elementary school curriculum as follows;
 - There are different methods
 - There are doubts about teachers' implementation of these methods
 - Application of guide books is not appropriate to the philosophy behind the curriculum
 - Parental issues affect the instructional process
 - Teachers have flexibility in methods
10. Classroom teachers perceived the strengths of resources as follows;
 - Variety in resources (44.07%)
 - Accessible in Kars (10.73%)
 - Appropriate text books (7.91%)
 - Appropriate teachers' books (5.08%)
11. Classroom teachers perceived the weaknesses of resources as follows;
 - Inappropriate Kars' conditions (9.04%)
 - Inappropriate to schools' conditions (8.47%)
 - Inappropriate to students' level (5.08%)
12. Teacher educators perceived resources of the new elementary school curriculum as follows;
 - Teachers should enrich the resources
 - Finding resources is problem in Kars
 - Resources should be chosen from local things
 - Physical conditions of schools are not appropriately provided by State
13. Classroom teachers perceived the strengths of assessment and evaluation as;
 - Variety in techniques (25.42%)
 - Process-oriented (7.91%)
 - Enhancing learning (7.34%)
14. Classroom teachers perceived the weaknesses of assessment and evaluation as follows;
 - Taking time (17.51%)
 - Costly (7.34%)
 - Not increasing parental involvement in educational process (5.08%)

15. Teacher educators perceived assessment and evaluation of the new elementary school curriculum as follows;

- It is process oriented
- It is better for monitoring learning
- Parental support is not just doing their children's homework
- There are doubts about teachers' knowledge in assessment and evaluation methods

The suggestions of classroom teachers for overcoming weaknesses of curriculum are follows;

- Addressing Kars' conditions (24.86%)
- Improving school conditions (23.73%)
- Increasing parental involvement to educational process (9.60%)
- Considering students' level (7.34%)
- Enriching content (6.78%)
- Decreasing number of students in classes (6.21%)

The major findings about additional regional needs of students about the new elementary school curriculum with respect to classroom teachers are as follows;

1. Classroom teachers perceived the additional regional needs of students as follows;

- Addressing Kars conditions (53.67%)
- Improving school conditions (17.51%)
- Overcoming language problem (15.25%)
- Emphasizing appropriateness to parents' conditions (13.56%)
- Increasing parents' involvement to educational process (12.43%)

The major findings about additional regional needs of classroom teachers about the new elementary school curriculum with respect to both classroom teachers and teacher educators are as follows;

1. Classroom teachers perceived the additional regional needs of classroom teachers as follows;

- Improving school conditions (44.07%)
- Addressing Kars conditions (30.51%)
- Increasing parental involvement to educational process (10.73%)
- Overcoming language problem (7.91%)

2. Teacher educators perceived the additional regional needs of classroom teachers as follows;

- Collaborating with school principals and parents in implementation of curriculum
- Decreasing size of the class for achieving active involvement of students
- Providing materials for teachers

Teacher educators' suggestions for providing classroom teachers' additional regional needs;

- In-service training about curriculum for classroom teachers
- Guidance of teachers during implementation of curriculum
- Giving teachers the responsibility of improving themselves
- Improving Kars' educational conditions in national exams
- Emphasizing teachers' knowledge about local conditions

In the next chapter, the major findings are discussed based on the research questions and implications for practice and further research are presented at the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents the discussion and conclusions based on the research questions respectively, and ends with suggestions for implications for practice and further research.

5.1. Discussion and Conclusions

This section is guided by the discussion of the findings in line with the following two questions: a) What are classroom teachers' perceptions about the implementation of the new elementary school curriculum (Grade 1 - 5) in Kars? b) What are the teacher educators' perceptions (Faculty and teaching assistants) about the implementation of the new elementary school curriculum (Grade 1 – 5) in Kars?

The findings indicate that investigating, from the perspective of classroom teachers and teacher educators, the implementation of the new elementary school curriculum in Kars Province gives significant clues about strengths and weaknesses classroom teachers face while implementation of the curriculum, the students' educational needs and classroom teachers' needs under Kars local characteristics. The results obtained through survey questionnaire from classroom teachers and the interviews with teacher educators based on the semi-structured interview form support and enlarge previous research results on the new elementary school curriculum (Adıgüzel, 2009; Alp, 2007; Altun and Şahin, 2009; Aydın, 2007; Birgin, Tutak and Türkdoğan, 2009; Birgin and Baki, 2009; Doğan Çeken, 2006; EARGED, 2005;

ERG, 2005; Keleş, 2009; Korkmaz, 2006; Senger, 2007; Sert, 2008; Subaşı, 2006; Turkish Statistical Institute, 1999; Yapıcı and Leblebiciler, 2007). Discussion of the findings based on research questions is presented in the proceeding sections, respectively.

5.1.1. Five Dimensions of the New Elementary School Curriculum (Objective, Content, Instructional Method, Resource, Assessment and Evaluation)

There are many reasons behind establishing a new elementary school curriculum according to TTKB (2005a); such as, changes in educational sciences and other sciences, increasing quality and equality in education, considering economical and democratic needs in education, developing a curriculum which considers individual and national values from the window of global values, decreasing reluctance of students to learning and schools through curriculum, decreasing rote learning and topics, increasing appropriateness to students' levels, increasing unity between elementary and secondary education, increasing relevancy with real life issues, increasing parallelism between lessons, increasing skills like creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, self expression, communication and entrepreneurship, and increasing success in national and international exams. When all these reasons behind establishing a new elementary school curriculum are considered, the findings about perceptions of both classroom teachers and teacher educators about the strengths of the curriculum based on five dimensions of curriculum (Objectives, content, instructional method, resource, assessment and evaluation) generally show that these reasons behind the change were somehow achieved and seen as strengths of implementation of the new elementary school curriculum. However, there were still weaknesses classroom teachers confronted while implementation of the new curriculum under Kars local characteristics and conditions. Discussion and conclusions regarding these findings are shared in the proceeding parts.

EARGED (2005) study posits that active student understanding is one of the strengths of the new elementary school curriculum. The results of this study also showed that active learning, student-centered understanding and some of the skills

defined in the new elementary school curriculum; such as, creative thinking, searching ability, ability to express themselves, critical thinking, right usage of Turkish language and ICT usage were seen as strengths of the curriculum in Kars. For instance; active learning, which is one of the basic approaches the new elementary school curriculum based on and an important tenet of constructivism, was highly cited by participant classroom teachers as strength of the new curriculum specifically under objectives, content and instructional methods dimensions. This result indicates that active student understanding and other premises of the new curriculum mentioned above are achieved during implementation of the new elementary school curriculum under Kars local characteristics and conditions.

One of the reasons behind establishing the new elementary school curriculum is making it appropriate to students' level (TTKB, 2005a). The data gathered from the participant classroom teachers showed that there was not a consensus about if the curriculum was appropriate to students' level or not with respect to different dimensions of curriculum. According to data, some classroom teachers found the objectives and content appropriate to students' level in Kars while few others thought that objectives, content and resources dimensions were inappropriate to students' level. Moreover, participant classroom teachers suggested considering students' level for effective implementation of the curriculum.

The data showed that participant teacher educators approached objective dimension of the new elementary school curriculum more positive than participant classroom teachers. According to the findings, teacher educators believed that objectives in the new curriculum could be attained by students, especially the critical ones that were important in learning. Moreover, the participant teacher educators saw the parental involvement significant for attainment of objectives. Despite teacher educators' positive approach to objective dimension, they had some doubts about parents in Kars. The results showed that teacher educators thought that parents in Kars did not know their responsibilities in educational process. However, parents' responsibilities are given importance by defining them in the new elementary school curriculum.

Although parental roles are emphasized in the new elementary school curriculum and parents have a crucial role in supporting their children's learning and for an effective implementation of the new elementary school curriculum, this issue was not highlighted frequently by classroom teachers. Only a few classroom teachers thought that content, and assessment and evaluation dimensions of the new elementary school curriculum did not increase parental involvement to educational process; and some of the classroom teachers suggested increasing parental involvement to educational process. However, being knowledgeable about curriculum and collaborating with teachers and school are two of the responsibilities defined in the new elementary school curriculum (TTKB, 2005b). Participant teacher educators, on the other hand, emphasized the parental involvement to educational process and stated the importance of parents' role in instructional process. They also noted that parents' doing homework was not a parental support. This finding indicates that although parents have a significant role in the educational process, this role is not known or understood by parents in Kars.

EARGED (2005) study emphasizes the relevancy with everyday life as strength of the new elementary school curriculum. In the light of data gathered, more than ten percent of the classroom teachers stated that content was relevant to students' everyday life in Kars whereas a small number of the participants thought just the opposite. What is more, teacher educators found the objective dimension of the new curriculum relevant to students' everyday life.

Alp's (2007) study indicates that teachers have positive attitude towards content of the new elementary school curriculum. In addition, about the content dimension of the new elementary school curriculum Adıgüzel's (2009) study indicates that there are less problems about this dimension with respect to classroom teachers' and school principals' views. The findings of this study revealed that there were contradicting perceptions about comprehensiveness of the new elementary school curriculum content; almost the same number of classroom teachers stated this issue from different perspectives; that is to say, some of the participant classroom teachers found the content comprehensive while almost the same amount of others thought it was not comprehensive. In addition, a small number of the classroom

teachers stated that objective dimension was also comprehensive, and had up-to-date topics and social topics.

From the window of findings about classroom teachers' perceptions, almost half of the participants found the variety in instructional method and resource dimensions as strengths of the new elementary school curriculum. Some of the classroom teachers also mentioned the variety in objective, and assessment and evaluation dimensions were also strengths of the new curriculum. Moreover, participant teacher educators emphasized the variety in instructional methods. Thus, variety in these dimensions enhances appropriateness to individual differences which is also one of the premises of the new elementary school curriculum. Related to the findings of this study about the teacher educators' perceptions; although there was a variety in instructional methods, they had doubts about teachers' appropriate usage of instructional methods. Furthermore, Adıgüzel's (2009) study indicates that there are problems realized about instructional methods dimension during implementation of the new curriculum according to classroom teachers' views.

The findings showed that school conditions in Kars was highly cited as weakness of the new elementary school curriculum by participant classroom teachers, specifically under objectives, resources and instructional dimensions. Yapıcı and Leblebiciler (2007) cite inappropriateness to school conditions along with other problems about physical infrastructure, labs and libraries, computer and other technologies and state that these are the biggest barriers for effective implementation of curriculum in villages. The studies of Altun and Şahin (2009), Aydın (2007), and Keleş (2009) also mention the insufficient materials in schools as a problem. Besides, the findings of this study indicated that insufficient resources was problem in urban regions of Kars, too. On the other hand, teacher educators frequently mentioned the classroom teachers' role in enriching resources. In addition, they suggested choosing materials from local things. Besides, in Keleş (2009) thesis, he also mentioned that local differences impacted the implementation of the new elementary school mathematics curriculum negatively in rural contexts. Teachers' responsibilities defined in the new elementary school curriculum encompass this as teachers should constitute an archive from the materials used in

activities (TTKB, 2005b). Teacher educators also suggested providing physical conditions of schools by State. In addition, this suggestion was also highlighted by Keleş (2009) as participants of his study claimed that content of Ministry support should have been more practice oriented and the curriculum materials should have been sufficient in number.

The results also showed that textbooks and teachers' books were seen as strength of the new elementary school curriculum under resource dimension. On the other hand, high number of students in the participant classroom teachers' classes was seen as weakness during implementation of the new curriculum. Almost a quarter of the classroom teachers suggested improving elementary schools' conditions in Kars Province and almost one tenth other participant classroom teachers suggested decreasing number of students in their classes.

Alternative assessment and evaluation methods are encouraged by the new elementary school curriculum. With the new understanding guided the preparation of assessment and evaluation dimension of the new elementary school curriculum, assessment and evaluation is considered as an integral part of learning; individual differences are considered; it also helps to monitor students' development, schools' functions and development; students' responsibility about obeying discipline system and rules is increased; and alternative assessment and evaluation methods are also encouraged (TTKB, 2005a). Based on these principles, one-tenth of the classroom teachers found assessment and evaluation methods process-oriented and enhancing learning. ERG (2005) covers these as there are various assessment and evaluation methods and process evaluation is addressed with the new elementary school curriculum. Teacher educators also emphasized process-oriented assessment and evaluation as strength. Based on previous studies about assessment and evaluation dimension of the new elementary school curriculum; Adıgüzel's (2009) study show that there are also less problems about this dimension with respect to classroom teachers' and school principals' views and Korkmaz's (2006) study's results show that applying many forms during assessment and evaluation is hard.

One fifth of the classroom teachers mentioned that assessment and evaluation dimension of the curriculum took time in application and furthermore, almost one

tenth of the participant classroom teachers thought that this dimension was costly. The study of Alp (2007) also emphasizes teachers' negative attitude towards assessment and evaluation. Moreover, applying many forms is also seen as a drawback in Korkmaz's (2006) study about teachers' evaluation of the new elementary school curriculum of first graders. Birgin, Tutak, and Türkdoğan's (2009) study indicates that teachers have problems in using assessment and evaluation methods, in addition, Birgin and Baki's (2009) study shows that teachers are not proficient in assessment and evaluation dimension of the new curriculum.

Although a significant percentage of teachers thought that the objectives of the new curriculum were not enhanceable with regard to Kars conditions, almost ten percent of the classroom teachers highlighted that objectives were enhanceable under Kars conditions. There were contradicting perceptions about the accessibility of the resources in Kars; in other words, one tenth of the participant classroom teachers stated that resources were accessible under Kars local conditions while almost the same of amount of others mentioned just the opposite. Participant teacher educators emphasized the inaccessibility of the resources and suggested choosing materials for local resources. A quarter of the participant classroom teachers also suggested addressing Kars' conditions during preparation of the curriculum.

Additional regional needs of elementary school students and classroom teachers were also investigated. The next section presents discussion based on the findings about these issues.

5.1.2. Students' and Classroom Teachers' Additional Regional Needs about the New Elementary School Curriculum

The part discusses elementary school students' needs from the perspective of classroom teachers and classroom teachers' needs based on both classroom teachers' and teacher educators' perspectives, and these are shared respectively in the next paragraphs.

Classroom teachers were asked to state the educational needs of elementary school students from the window of Kars local characteristics and conditions; in other

words, the gap between what local educational status in Kars is and what it should be are considered under social, economic, cultural, geographical and climate conditions of Kars. In the light of the findings, more than half of the classroom teachers cited addressing Kars conditions during preparation of elementary school curriculum as a need of elementary school students in Kars. They emphasized that the weaknesses classroom teachers confronted while implementation of the new elementary school curriculum could be overcome by achieving this.

Furthermore, improving school conditions was also seen as an elementary school students' need, according to the findings elementary schools' physical conditions, other materials and resources were not provided appropriately, and appropriate to implementation of the new elementary school curriculum. However, as mentioned above the new elementary school curriculum necessitates many resources and materials (ERG, 2005), and this finding is also justified in previous studies (Altun and Şahin 2009; Aydın, 2007; Doğan Çeken, 2006; Sert, 2008; Subaşı, 2006; Yapıcı and Leblebiciler, 2007).

In addition, although in limited numbers, overcoming low Turkish language problem issue was mentioned by classroom teachers as a need to be considered in the implementation of the elementary school curriculum in Kars. As known, EARGED (2005) study indicates that ability about right usage of Turkish language is found as strength of the new curriculum. However, this study shows that there are still problems realized during implementation of the new elementary school curriculum.

Parental involvement to educational process was also mentioned by classroom teachers as students' educational need. Besides, there were problems about parents' conditions in Kars, especially parents' economical conditions. Thus, appropriateness to parents' conditions was also emphasized in providing their children specifically the materials necessary for effective implementation of the new curriculum.

Secondly, both classroom teachers and teacher educators were asked to indicate classroom teachers' needs in Kars about the new elementary school curriculum. The

findings revealed that there were many additional needs of classroom teachers for effective implementation of the new elementary school curriculum in Kars.

The highly cited issues were improving school conditions and addressing Kars conditions during preparation of the curriculum. Insufficient materials and unequipped schools were stated as the weaknesses in implementation the new elementary school curriculum in Kars by teacher educators, too. Decreasing size of the classes and providing materials for teachers were also seen as needs of classroom teachers. These issues are emphasized by previous research, too (Altun and Şahin 2009; Aydın, 2007; Doğan Çeken, 2006; Sert, 2008; Subaşı, 2006; Yapıcı and Leblebiciler, 2007). Decreasing size of the class was mentioned by teacher educators, however, when the average size of the classes (which is about 27) in Kars considered, it is less than average of Turkey [which is about 32 (MONE, 2009)].

Besides, parental involvement to educational process and overcoming low Turkish language problem were also cited by some of the classroom teachers. As seen, these classroom teachers' needs were almost same to the educational needs of elementary school students in Kars.

Teacher educators' perceptions, on the other hand, showed that one of the needs of classroom teachers was collaborating with school principals and parents in implementation of curriculum. As known, there are responsibilities defined for school principals and parents; collaboration between teachers, and school principals and parents is emphasized (TTKB, 2005b).

Teacher educators suggested in-service training about the new elementary school curriculum for classroom teachers and guidance of teachers during implementation of curriculum. This was an interesting finding, due to the fact that although the new elementary school curriculum has been in use for five years, many participant classroom teachers did not participate in-service training about the new elementary school curriculum in last three years. When in-service training status of participant classroom teachers is considered, only six of them stated that s/he had participated

an in-service training about the new elementary school curriculum in last three years.

Giving teachers the responsibility of improving themselves was also suggested by teacher educators and EARGED's study (2005) states that the new elementary school curriculum leads teachers to improve themselves and research. On the other hand, the result of this study shows that there is still a need to give teachers the responsibility of improving themselves.

5.2. Implications for Practice

The findings and process of the study enable to comprehend classroom teachers' perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers face with the new elementary school curriculum and its implementation in Kars, students' educational needs, classroom teachers' needs from the perspective of local characteristics of Kars and it also tries to find teacher educators' perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses the classroom teachers confront while implementation of the new elementary school curriculum in Kars, and classroom teachers' needs. In the light of the findings of this study, there are some implications for practice, these are:

1. The results of this study show that examining different dimensions mentioned above contributed to literature about the new elementary school curriculum. Both classroom teachers and teacher educators are encouraged during thinking about the new elementary school curriculum under Kars local characteristics and conditions in different dimensions. Participants have also chance to explain their thoughts and feelings appropriate to research questions in real life context.
2. This study indicates that implementation of the new elementary school curriculum is influenced by educational needs of students and classroom teachers' needs from the perspective of local conditions and characteristics; so local authorities should have responsibilities in different dimensions of curriculum development policy. As Akar (2010) states, curriculum policy

should enable students build skills for lifelong learning and provide opportunities to discover their mechanical or artistic abilities for future aspirations. Moreover, Aksit (2007) emphasizes that this should be realized from the window of empowerment of local authorities in identifying and implementing an agenda based on the educational needs and interests of children in their community and enabling them to make local decisions about educational provision within the framework of unified system (as cited in Akar, 2010).

3. Schools' conditions, such as schools' infrastructure, equipment and other resources should be enhanced for effective implementation of the new elementary school curriculum.
4. This study presents implications about language problems in students; thus, students with language problems can be enhanced through completing extra courses within elementary school education or establishing compulsory preschool education.
5. Parental involvement to educational process is also one of the cited issues by participants. Teachers and school principals should realize their responsibilities defined in the new elementary school curriculum about preparing informative seminars for parents about educational process. Parents' responsibilities defined again in the new elementary school curriculum should be explained by teachers and school principals to parents.
6. Findings of this study reveal that classroom teachers have still problems about the new elementary school curriculum and its implementation, so in-service training should be provided to teachers and these in-service trainings about new elementary school curriculum and its implementation should be compulsory to teachers for increasing their participation.
7. The data gathered show the importance of addressing local characteristics and conditions for effective implementation of the curriculum, so teacher education programs should encourage prospective teachers to learn about the characteristics and conditions of the place they work. In addition, about

this issue teacher educators and inspectors of MONE can collaborate for arranging adaptation to local characteristics and conditions seminars for teachers.

5.3. Implications for Further Research

This study examined perceptions of classroom teacher and teacher educators about the new elementary school curriculum in different dimensions in Kars as mentioned previously. Following this study there are further implications for research, these are

1. Findings raised a lot of themes about each research question. This study could be explored through a different research paradigm or a combination of different data collection methods. Another suggestion is that a case study can be conducted for exploring any theme derived from this study for descending into details for drawing a comprehensive picture about a specific case. The researcher conducted this study only in urban regions of Kars due to time constraints and transportation problem. Therefore, it is suggested that further research should be conducted with classroom teachers in rural areas on how they evaluate the implementation process of the new curriculum. Yet, since this study reached all urban classroom teachers population. The findings of this study can be generalized to provinces in Turkey who are under same conditions. Thus, this study is contributory to similar studies in different provinces countrywide.
2. A lot of the themes derived during the analysis of the study, one of them (Student related issues, social / cultural issues, structure of objectives, scope of content, format of content or assessment and evaluation, qualification / properties of instructional methods or resources, etc.) could be investigated deeply using a different research paradigm or a combination of them.
3. This study has presented only classroom teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions whereas parents', students' or other stakeholders like inspectors' and school principals' perceptions are also important to be studied. These

stakeholders' perceptions might contribute to the field in different dimensions and see their perceptions.

4. This study was realized in Kars Province. In order to see how classroom teachers working in other provinces in Turkey perceive the same issues (See the research questions) in their own context, a study can be realized.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION FORM (CLASSROOM TEACHERS)

Gönüllü Katılım Formu (*Bilgilendirilmiş Onay*)

Bu çalışma, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Programları ve Öğretimi ABD Yüksek lisans öğrencisi Arş. Gör. Tuğba YALÇIN tarafından yürütülen, “Kars İl’inde İlköğretim Programının Uygulanması Hakkında Öğretmen ve Öğretmen Yetiştiricilerinin Algıları” adlı yüksek lisans tezi kapsamı içerisindeki bir çalışmadır. Çalışmanın amacı, paydaşların yeni ilköğretim programlarının uygulanması sırasında yaşadıkları güçlü ve zayıf yönleri hakkında bilgi toplamaktır. Çalışmaya katılım tamamıyla gönüllülük temelindedir. Çalışma süresince, sizden kimlik belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamimiyle gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir; elde edilecek bilgiler bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır.

Sınıf öğretmenlerimizden, kendilerine verilen anketi eksiksiz olarak doldurup uygulayıcıya teslim etmesini bekliyoruz. Anketi doldurma süresi 30 dakika olarak tahmin edilmektedir. Katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz çalışmayı yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda çalışmada sorumlu kişiye, çalışmadan ayrılmak istediğinizi söylemek yeterli olacaktır. Çalışmanın veri toplama aşamasının sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız cevaplanacaktır. Bu çalışmaya katıldığımız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü yüksek lisans öğrencisi Tuğba YALÇIN (Tel: 0 474 212 43 86; E-posta: e159486@metu.edu.tr) ya da öğretim üyelerinden Yrd. Doç. Dr. Hanife AKAR (Tel: 0 312 210 40 97; E-posta: hanif@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum. (Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

Ad ve Soyadı: _____ Tarih: _____ İmza: _____

APPENDIX B:
VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION FORM (TEACHER EDUCATORS)

Gönüllü Katılım Formu (*Bilgilendirilmiş Onay*)

Bu çalışma, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Programları ve Öğretimi ABD Yüksek lisans öğrencisi Arş. Gör. Tuğba YALÇIN tarafından yürütülen, “Kars İl’inde İlköğretim Programının Uygulanması Hakkında Öğretmen ve Öğretmen Yetiştiricilerinin Algıları” adlı yüksek lisans tezi kapsamı içerisindeki bir çalışmadır. Çalışmanın amacı, paydaşların yeni ilköğretim programlarının uygulanması sırasında yaşadıkları güçlü ve zayıf yönleri hakkında bilgi toplamaktır. Çalışmaya katılım tamamıyla gönüllülük temelindedir. Çalışma süresince, sizden kimlik belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamimiyle gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir; elde edilecek bilgiler bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır.

Öğretmen yetiştiricileri ile uygulayıcı tarafından bir görüşme yapılacaktır, görüşmenin yaklaşık 1 saat süreceği tahmin edilmektedir. Katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz çalışmayı yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda çalışmada sorumlu kişiye, çalışmadan ayrılmak istediğinizi söylemek yeterli olacaktır. Çalışmanın veri toplama aşamasının sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız cevaplanacaktır. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü yüksek lisans öğrencisi Tuğba YALÇIN (Tel: 0 474 212 43 86; E-posta: e159486@metu.edu.tr) ya da öğretim üyelerinden Yrd. Doç. Dr. Hanife AKAR (Tel: 0 312 210 40 97; E-posta: hanif@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum. (Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

Ad ve Soyadı: _____ Tarih: _____ İmza: _____

APPENDIX C:
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (CLASSROOM TEACHERS)

**İLKÖĞRETİM PROGRAMININ UYGULANMASINA YÖNELİK SINIF
ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ALGILARI ANKETİ (KARS İLİ ÖRNEĞİ)**

Değerli Meslektaşım,

Bu anketin amacı, “Kars İl’inde İlköğretim Programının Uygulanması: Öğretmen ve Öğretmen Yetiştiricilerinin Algıları”nı tespit etmek ve yeni programın uygulanmasına yönelik yaşantı ve algılarınızı anlamaktır. Hazırlanan anket, 3 sayfadan oluşmakta ve cevaplanması yaklaşık 30 dakika sürmektedir. Birinci bölümde “kişisel bilgiler” ve ikinci bölümde ise “ilköğretim programlarının uygulanması hakkındaki algılar” ile ilgili sorular yer almaktadır.

Bu anket ile elde edilecek veriler yalnızca bu araştırma için kullanılacaktır ve size ait özel bilgiler araştırmacıda saklı kalacaktır. Araştırmanın sağlıklı sonuçlar vermesi için, ölçekteki ifadeleri değerlendirirken içten ve titiz davranmakla birlikte **ifadelerin tümüne** cevap vermeniz büyük önem taşımaktadır. Katkılarınız için şimdiden teşekkür eder, saygılar sunarım.

Arş. Gör. Tuğba YALÇIN
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E-posta: e159486@metu.edu.tr

BÖLÜM 1 - Kişisel Bilgiler

1. Görev Yaptığınız İlçe:

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kars (Merkez) | <input type="checkbox"/> Akyaka | <input type="checkbox"/> Arpaçay | <input type="checkbox"/> Digor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kağızman | <input type="checkbox"/> Sarıkamış | <input type="checkbox"/> Selim | <input type="checkbox"/> Susuz |

2. Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın Erkek

3. Yaşınız: _____

4. Aldığınız En Yüksek Derece:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ön lisans | <input type="checkbox"/> Lisans | <input type="checkbox"/> Yüksek Lisans | <input type="checkbox"/> Doktora |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|

5. Mezun Olduđunuz Lisans Programı:

Eğitim Fakóltesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakóltesi

Eğitim Yüksekokulu

İlk Öğretmen Okulu Eğitim Enstitüsü

Diğer (*Lütfen Belirtiniz*): _____

6. Mezun Olduđunuz Bölüm: _____

7. Kaç yıldır öğretmenlik yapıyorsunuz? : _____

8. Kars'ta kaç yıldır öğretmenlik yapıyorsunuz?: _____

9. Bu okuldaki kaç yıldır sınıf öğretmenliği yapıyorsunuz: _____

10. Okuldaki Toplam Öğrenci Sayısı: _____

11. Sınıfınızdaki öğrenci sayısı: Kız: _____ **Erkek:** _____

12. Okulunuzda aşağıdakilerden hangileri mevcuttur? (Birden fazla seçenek işaretleyebilirsiniz)

Anasınıfı

Kütüphane

Spor Salonu

Açık Spor Sahası

Seminer / Konferans Salonu

Fen Laboratuvarı

Bilgisayar Laboratuvarı

Diğer, *lütfen belirtiniz.* _____

13. Son üç yılda hizmet içi eğitime katıldınız mı?

Evet

Hayır

Evet ise, hangi konularda seminer aldığınızı ve katıldığınız süreyi gün, hafta ya da ay olarak belirtiniz:

14. Yeni ilköğretim programı ile ilgili başka kaynaklardan (rehberlik, destekleyici kaynak, müfettiş vb) nasıl destek aldığınızı ya da yararlandığınızı açıklayınız?

BÖLÜM II: İlköğretim Programının Uygulanması ile ilgili Algular

Bu bölüm, sınıf öğretmenlerinin ilköğretim programlarının Kars koşullarında uygulanması hakkındaki algılarını saptamak amacıyla oluşturulmuştur.

I. Sınıf öğretmeni olarak yeni ilköğretim programının okulunuzda uygulanması sürecinde yaşadığınız olumlu durumları aşağıda verilen her bir boyutu dikkate alarak nedenleriyle açıklayınız.

Hedefler: _____

İçerik: _____

Kaynaklar: _____

Uygulanacak öğretim yöntemleri: _____

Değerlendirme: _____

Diğer: _____

II. Sınıf öğretmeni olarak yeni ilköğretim programının okulunuzda uygulanması sürecinde yaşadığınız güçlükleri (zorluk) her bir boyutu dikkate alarak nedenleriyle açıklayınız.

Hedefler: _____

İçerik: _____

Kaynaklar: _____

Uygulanacak öğretim yöntemleri: _____

Değerlendirme: _____

Diğer: _____

III. Yukarıda sözünü ettiğiniz güçlüklerle baş etmek için neler önerirsiniz?

IV. Sizce Kars'taki ilköğretim öğrencilerinin mevcut programına ek bölgesel (ekonomik, coğrafi, kültürel, dil vs.) eğitim ihtiyaçları hangi konularla ilgilidir? Lütfen nedenleriyle açıklayınız.

V. Kars'ta bir sınıf öğretmeni olarak sizin mevcut ilköğretim programını uygulamanız açısından ihtiyaçlarınız (ekonomik, coğrafi, kültürel, dil vs.) nelerdir? Lütfen nedenleriyle açıklayınız.

VI.İlköğretim programının uygulanmasına yönelik belirtmek istediğiniz başka durumlar varsa lütfen açıklayınız.

Katkılarınız için teşekkür ederim

APPENDIX D:
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FORM (TEACHER EDUCATORS)

GÖRÜŞME FORMU
“ÖĞRETMEN YETİŞTİRİCİLERİ”

Tarih ve saat (Başlangıç ve bitiş): _____

Görüşmeci: _____

GİRİŞ

Merhaba, benim adım Tuğba Yalçın ve Kafkas Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi’nde araştırma görevlisiyim. Bu araştırma, benim Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Programları ve Öğretimi Programı’nda hazırladığım “*Kars İl’inde Yeni İlköğretim Programının Uygulanması Hakkında Öğretmen ve Öğretmen Yetiştiricilerinin Alguları*” adlı yüksek lisans tezim içindir. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı 2005-2006 akademik yılında uygulanmaya başlayan mevcut ilköğretim programının Kars İl’inde uygulanması ile ilgili görüşünüzü almak ve program ile ilgili eğitim ihtiyaçlarını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Başlamadan önce şu hususları hatırlatmak isterim:

- Görüşme ile ilgili tüm kişisel bilgileriniz bende saklı tutulacaktır. Söyleyeceklerinizin tümüyle gizlidir. Bu bilgileri araştırmacıların dışında herhangi kimsenin görmesi mümkün değildir.
- Başlamadan önce, bu söylediklerimle ilgili belirtmek istediğiniz bir düşünce ya da sormak istediğiniz bir soru var mı?
- Görüşmeyi izin verirseniz kaydetmek istiyorum. Bunun amacı, sizden duyduklarımı tam olarak değerlendirmektir.
- Bu görüşmenin yaklaşık 1 saat süreceğini tahmin ediyorum. İzin verirseniz sorulara başlamak istiyorum.

BÖLÜM I - Kişisel Bilgiler

I. Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın Erkek

II. Yaşınız: _____

III. Akademik Unvanınız:

- Doktor Araştırma Görevlisi
- Yardımcı Doçent
- Doçent
- Profesör
- Öğretim görevlisi

IV. Ne kadar zamandır bu akademik unvana sahipsiniz? _____

V. Ne kadar zamandır Kafkas Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi'nde çalışıyorsunuz? _____

VI. Yurt dışında eğitim amaçlı bulundunuz mu?

1. Lisans Eğitimi
2. Yüksek lisans Eğitimi
3. Doktora Eğitimi
4. Araştırma
5. Diğer. Lütfen açıklayınız _____

VII. Çalışma alanınız:

1. Eğitim Bilimleri
2. Sosyal Bilimler
3. Uygulamalı Bilimler
4. Diğer. Lütfen açıklayınız _____

VIII. İlköğretimde öğretmenlik deneyiminiz var mı?

1. Evet
 2. Hayır
- Evet ise, kaç yıl: _____

BÖLÜM II – Görüşme Soruları

I. Mevcut ilköğretim programı ile ne derecede tanışıksınız?

- Öğrencilerin öğretmenlik uygulamalarında mentorluk yapıyor musunuz?
- Öğretmenlik uygulamaları ile ilgili neler yapıyorsunuz?

II. Genel olarak ilköğretim programı hakkındaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

- Güçlü yönleri?
- Zayıf yönleri?

III. Sizce, mevcut ilköğretim programının Kars koşullarında uygulanmasında güçlü yönleri nelerdir? Açıklayabilir misiniz?

- Okul koşulları açısından?

- Ailelerin genel ekonomik durumu açısından?
- Kars'ın coğrafi durumu açısından?
- Kars'ın iklim koşulları açısından?
- Kars'ın sosyal durumu açısından?
- Kars'ın kültürel durumu açısından?

IV. Sizce, mevcut ilköğretim programının Kars koşullarında uygulanmasında zayıf yönleri nelerdir? Açıklayabilir misiniz?

- Okul koşulları açısından?
- Ailelerin genel ekonomik durumu açısından?
- Kars'ın coğrafi durumu açısından?
- Kars'ın iklim koşulları açısından?
- Kars'ın sosyal durumu açısından?
- Kars'ın kültürel durumu açısından?

V. Kars'ta bir sınıf öğretmenin ilköğretim programını uygulaması açısından hangi ihtiyaçları olduğunu gözlemlediniz? Açıklayabilir misiniz?

VI. Söz ettiğiniz sınıf öğretmenlerinin ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabilmeleri açısından neler önerirsiniz? Örnekler vererek açıklayabilir misiniz?

VII. Mevcut ilköğretim programı kazanımları:

- Kars koşullarına uygunluğu hakkında neler düşünüyorsunuz?
 - Kaynaklar, coğrafya, kültür, günlük yaşam, okul dışı sosyal çevre vb.
 - Ailelerin katılımını nasıl destekliyor?

VIII. Mevcut ilköğretim programı içeriği:

- Kars koşullarına uygunluğu hakkında neler düşünüyorsunuz?
 - Kaynaklar, coğrafya, kültür, günlük yaşam, okul dışı sosyal çevre vb.
 - Ailelerin katılımını nasıl destekliyor?

IX. : Kars'taki sınıf öğretmenleri ne derecede Mevcut ilköğretim programının önerdiği öğretim yöntemleri uygulayabiliyorlar? Nedenlerini lütfen açıklayınız.

X. Mevcut ilköğretim programının önerdiği kaynakların Kars koşullarına uygunluğu hakkında neler düşünüyorsunuz? Lütfen açıklayınız.

- Öğrencilerin yöresel ve bölgesel ihtiyaçları?
- Öğrencilerin Kars'taki günlük yaşamı?

XI. Mevcut ilköğretim programının önerdiği değerlendirme yöntemleri Kars koşullarına uygunluğu hakkında neler düşünüyorsunuz? Lütfen açıklayınız.

- Öğretmenlerin uygulamaları?
- Velilerin desteklemeleri?

XII. Yukarıda söyledikleriniz dışında söyleme ihtiyacı duyduğunuz durumlar nelerdir? Bunlardan söz ederseniz bizim için yararlı olacaktır.

Not: Bu görüşme benim çalışmam için çok yararlı oldu. Katkılarınız ve zaman ayırdığınız için teşekkür ederim. Kaset çözümlemesini tamamladıktan sonra sizin onaylamanız için E-posta adresinize tüm görüşmeyi aktaracağımı hatırlatmak isterim.

APPENDIX E:
PERMISSION OF METU ETHICS COUNCIL



1956

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi
Middle East Technical University
Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü
Graduate School of
Natural and Applied Sciences
06531 Ankara, Türkiye
Phone: +90 (312) 2102292
Fax: +90 (312) 2107959
www.fbe.metu.edu.tr

Sayı: B.30.2.ODT.0.AH.00.00/38-634

13 Mayıs 2009

Gönderilen: Yrd.Doç.Dr. Hanife Akar
Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü
Gönderen : Prof. Dr. Canan Özgen
IAK Başkan Yardımcısı
İlgi : Etik Onayı

Danışmanlığını yapmış olduğunuz ve ekte anketleri sunulmuş olan Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Tuğba Yalçın'ın "Kars İlinde İlköğretim Programlarının Uygulanması Hakkında Öğretmen ve Öğretmen Yetiştiricilerinin Algıları" başlığıyla yürüttüğü çalışması "İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Komitesi" tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Ek: Anketler

Etik Komite Onayı

Uygundur

13/05/2009

Prof.Dr. Canan ÖZGEN
Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi
(UEAM) Başkanı
ODTÜ 06531 ANKARA

APPENDIX F:
PERMISSION OF KARS DIRECTORATE OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

T.C.
KARS VALİLİĞİ
Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : B.08.4.M.E.M.4.36.00.03.500/10400

25 MAYIS 2009

Konu : Araştırma

VALİLİK MAKAMINA
KARS

Kafkas Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi İlköğretim Bölümü Matematik Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı Araştırma Görevlisi Tuğba YALÇIN'ın "İlimizde İlköğretim Programının Uygulanması: Öğretmen ve Öğretmen Yetiştiricilerinin Algıları" adlı araştırmasını İlimiz Merkezinde ve İlçelerde İlköğretim Okullarında görevli Sınıf Öğretmenleriyle görüşme yapabilmesi Kafkas Üniversitesi Personel Dairesi Başkanlığının 20.05.2009 tarih ve 1443 sayılı yazılarında belirtilmektedir.

Kafkas Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi İlköğretim Bölümü Matematik Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı Araştırma Görevlisi Tuğba YALÇIN'ın "İlimizde İlköğretim Programının Uygulanması: Öğretmen ve Öğretmen Yetiştiricilerinin Algıları" Merkez İlköğretim Okullarında görevli Sınıf Öğretmenleriyle yapacağı görüşme metni ve belgeleri, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına Bağlı Okul ve Kurumlarda Yapılacak Araştırma ve Araştırma Desteğine Yönelik İzin ve Uygulama Yönergesinin 10.maddesine göre oluşturulan Araştırma Değerlendirme Komisyonu tarafından değerlendirilmiş olup, adı geçen araştırmacının Müdürlüğümüz tarafından mühürlenerek ekli görüşme soruları, İlimiz Merkezinde ve İlçelerde İlköğretim Okullarında görevli sınıf öğretmenlerine dersleri aksatmayacak şekilde uygulanmasını, araştırma sonucunun CD'ye kayıtlı olarak kurumumuza verilmesi Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmektedir.

Makamlarınızca uygun görüldüğü takdirde Olur'larınıza arz ederim.

Ekrem EKİCİ
Milli Eğitim Müdürü

OLUR
22/05/2009

Turgut GÜLEN
Vali a
Vali Yardımcısı



ADRES : İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü 36200- KARS
Tel : 0 474 212 82 26 Faks:0474 212 82 29
E-POSTA- karsmem@meh.gov.tr
İnt. Adresi: http://karsmem.gov.tr

DANISMA EĞİTİME
444 0 632 %100
H A T T I D E S T E K



EĞİTİMDE REFORM
EĞİTİMDE REFORM

APPENDIX G: TEACHER EDUCATORS' PERMISSIONS



Re: Görüşme Onayı

Thu, September 3, 2009 4:22:09 PM

From: [View Contact](#)
To: chrtugba@yahoo.com

Merhaba Tuğba,
Tabiki kullanabilirsin gerekli özeni göstererek herhangi bir sakınca görmüyorum.
Başarılar.



Re: Görüşme Onayı

Wed, September 23, 2009 2:29:18 PM

From: [View Contact](#)
To: chrtugba@yahoo.com

Görüşme sonuçlarını kullanmanda hiçbir sakınca yok. Başarılar.

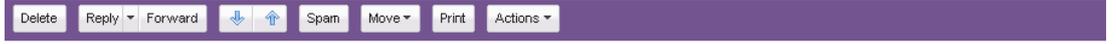


Re: Görüşme Onayı

Wed, October 7, 2009 7:45:57 PM

From: [View Contact](#)
To: chrtugba@yahoo.com

Merhaba Tuğba Hocam,
Görüşme sonuçlarını kullanmanızda hiçbir sakınca yok.
Kolay gelsin.



Re: Onay

Wed, January 13, 2010 7:54:20 PM

From: [View Contact](#)
To: chrtugba@yahoo.com

Tuğbacım verileri kullanmanda hiçbir sakınca yoktur.

Delete Reply Forward Download Upload Spam Move Print Actions

Re: Onay

Wed, January 13, 2010 6:19:03 PM

From: [View Contact](#)
To: chintugba@yahoo.com

Merhaba Tuğbacım, görüşmemizde elde ettiğin verileri kullanmada hiç bir sakınca yok. Kolay gelsin.

Delete Reply Forward Download Upload Spam Move Print Actions

Re: Onay

Wed, January 20, 2010 11:02:52 AM

From: [View Contact](#)
To: chintugba@yahoo.com

Merhaba Tuğba,
Verileri kullanabilirsin, bir sorun olmaz.
Basarılar.

APPENDIX H: SAMPLE CODING PROCESS (SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE)

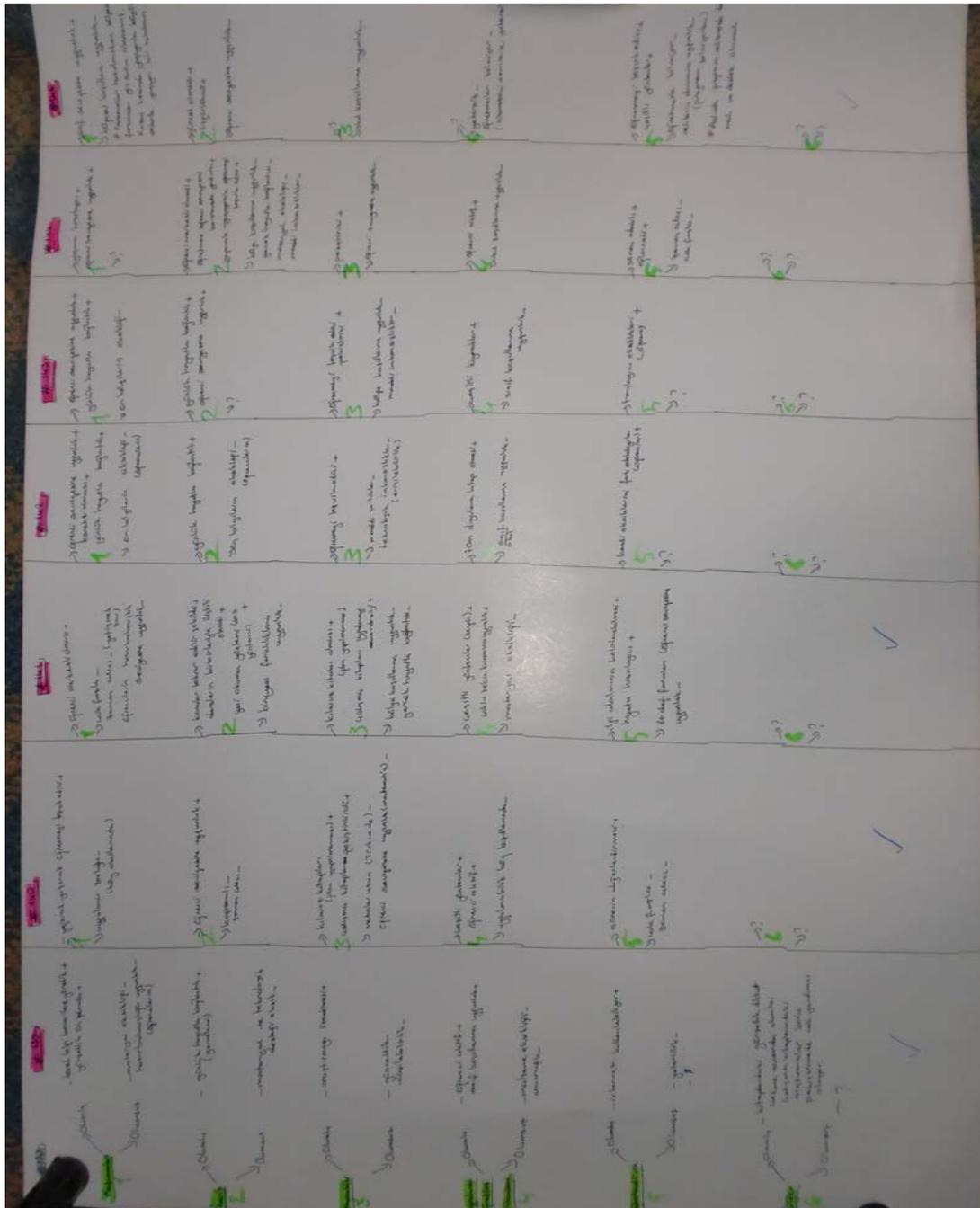


Figure 2. Sample codes in each survey questionnaire based on research questions

(1).

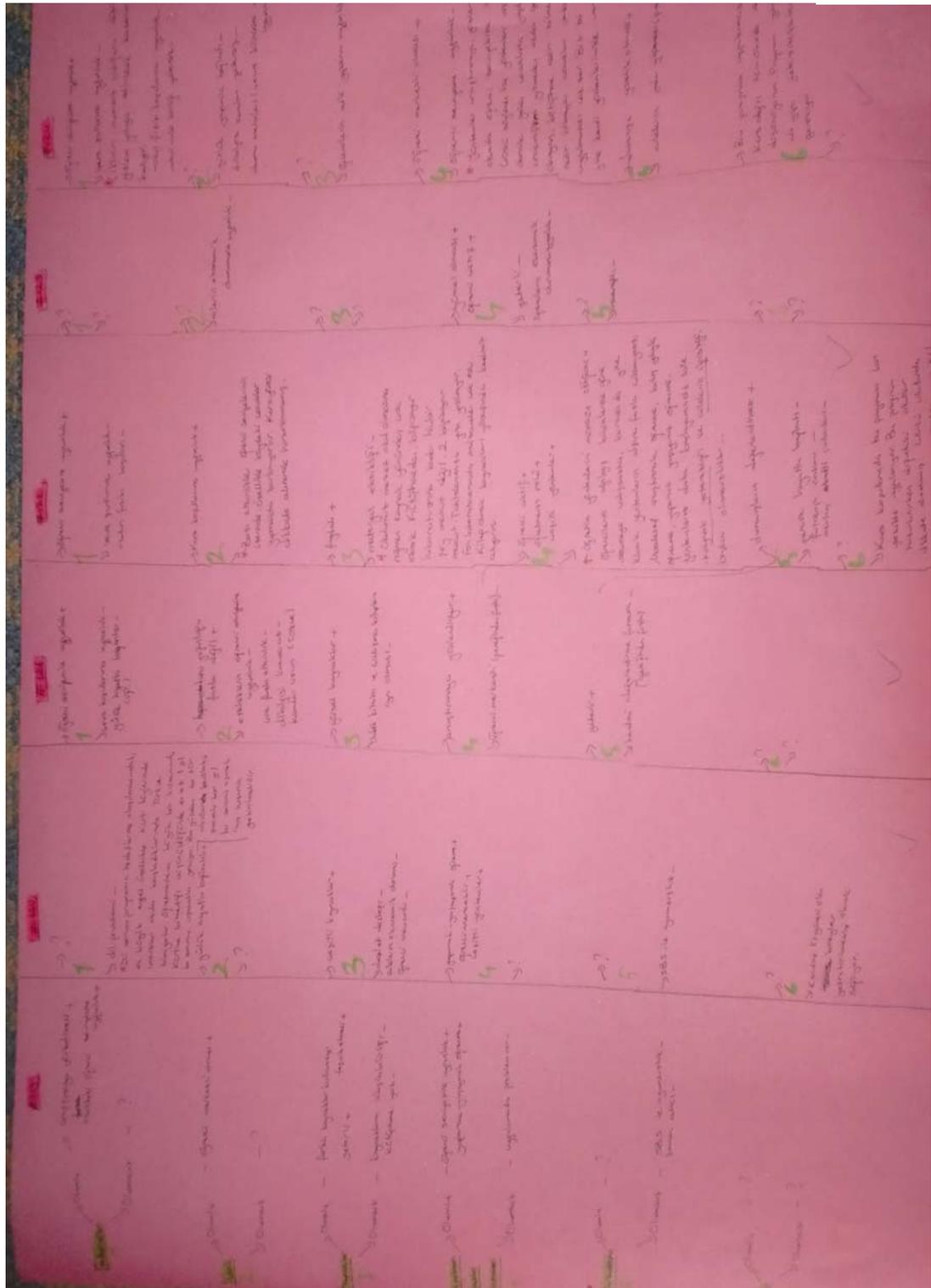


Figure 3. Sample codes in each survey questionnaire based on research questions (2).



Figure 4. First draft of the data analysis (Sample 1)

- ✓ kavramların ifade etme (#113)
- ✓ soruların binyeller (#112)
- ✓ jürinin köşük (#3)
- ✓ keşif süreciyle ilgili (#5)
- ✓ öğrenci değil (#6) (#34) (#90)
- ✓ öğretmen değil (#6)
- ✓ teknoloji kullanımı (#6)
- ✓ öğrencinin yasa uyumu (#10)
- ✓ (örneğin genetik mühendislik) ulaşılabilmek (#11)
- ✓ aktif öğrenme (#12)
- ✓ öğrenme odaklı (#13)
- ✓ önceki bilgilerle bağdaştırılabilir (#13) (#14) (#64)
- ✓ çok fazla olması (#15) (#95)
- ✓ evrensel (#20)
- ✓ günlük yaşamla uyumluluk (#22) (#14) (#112) (#143)
- ✓ Türkiye'nin koşullarına uyumluluk (#27)
- ✓ okul koşulları (#28) (#93)
- ✓ ülkenin ekonomik durumu (#29)
- ✓ olumlu (#31) (#53)
- ✓ ilerletilebilir (#32) (#100) (#111)
- ✓ birleştirilmiş sınıflara uyumluluk (#34)
- ✓ vakti destekli (#36) (#56)
- ✓ dikkat odaklı (#41)
- ✓ yapıcı değil (#50)
- ✓ öğrenciyi yönlendirme (#60)
- ✓ öğretmeni değil (#81) (#84) (#111) (#170)
- ✓ Bilgiye ulaşmaya yardımcı (#82)
- ✓ temalara uygun (#100)
- ✓ yapıcı hatırlatıcı (#111)

Figure 5. First draft of the data analysis (Sample 1 continued)

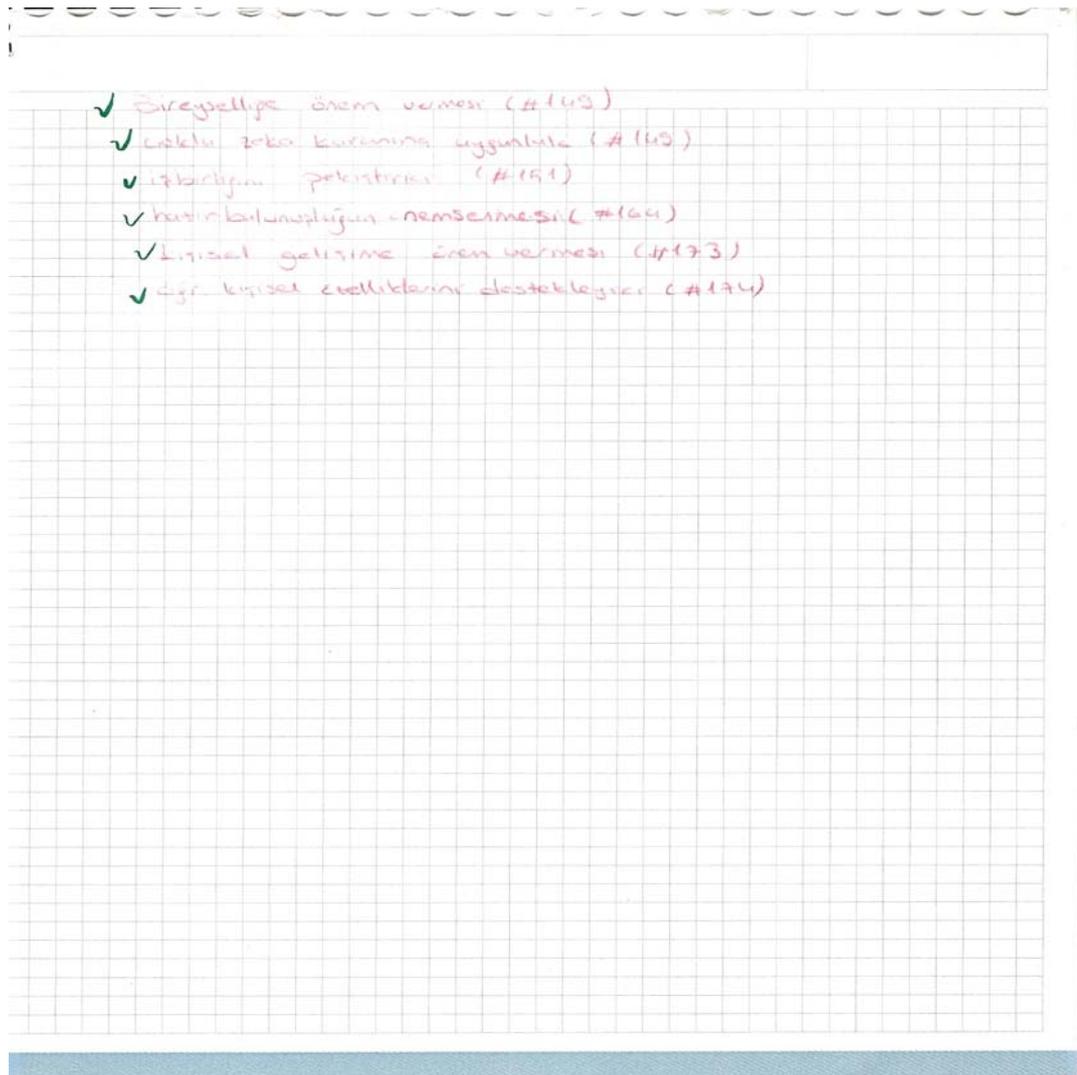


Figure 6. First draft of the data analysis (Sample 1 continued)

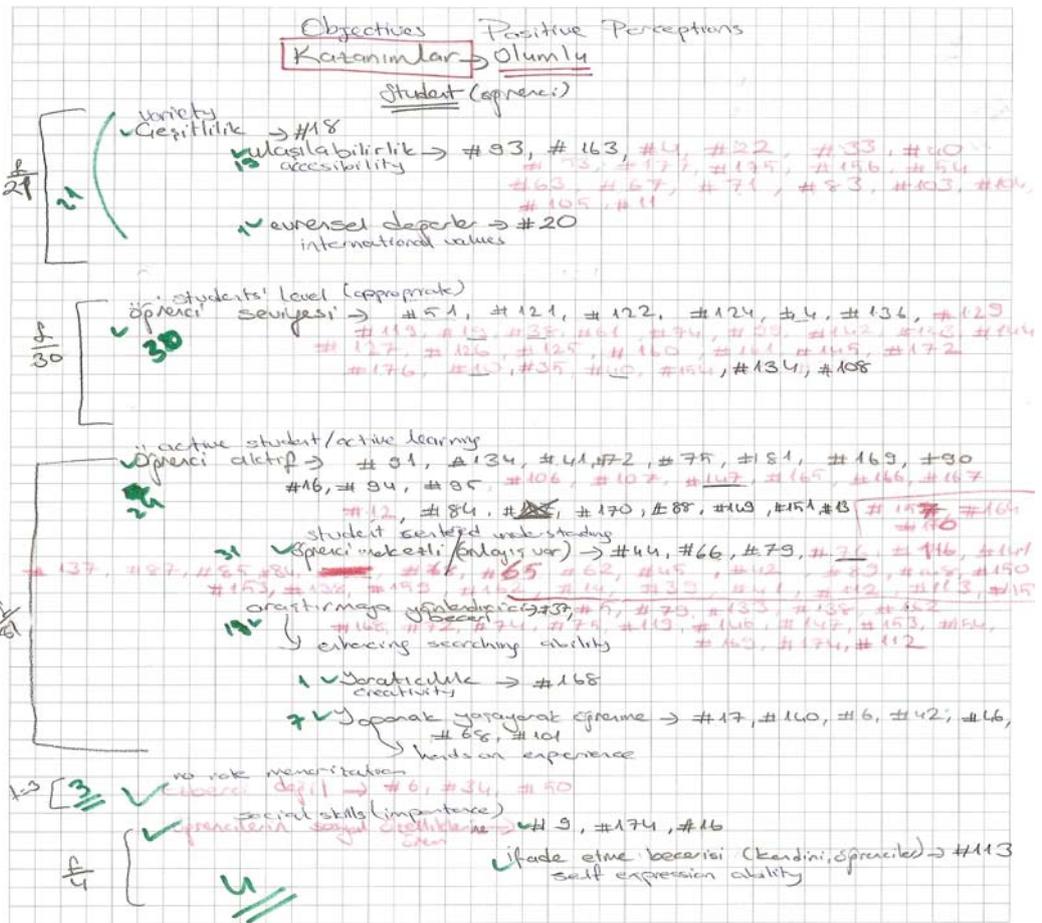


Figure 7. Codes represented under themes derived (Sample 2)

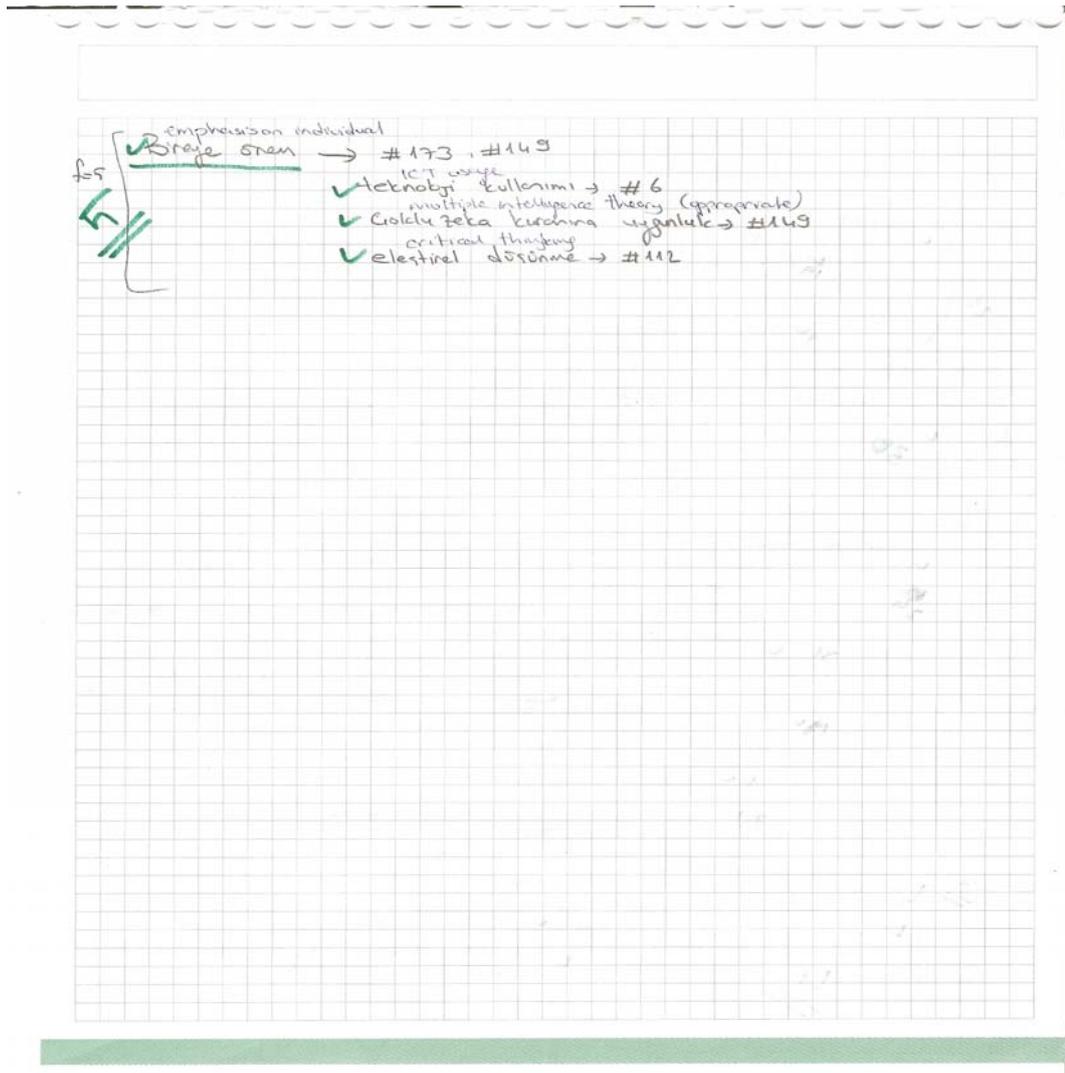


Figure 8. Codes represented under themes derived (Sample 2 continued).

APPENDIX I:
SAMPLE CROSS CHECK (SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE)

OBJECTIVES	Student/Related
Class Teachers Positive Perceptions	
<p>Öğrenci seviyesine uygunluk</p> <p>Students' level: 4, 10, 19, 35, 38, 40, 51, 61, 74, 99, 108, 119, 121, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 129, 134, 136, 142, 143, 144, 145, 154, 160, 161, 172, 176, (n=30)</p>	
← Accessible objectives: 4, 11, 22, 33, 40, 53, 54, 63, 67, 71, 83, 93, 103, 104, 105, 156, 163, 175, 177, (n=19)	
Searching ability: 5, 37, 72, 74, 75, 79, 119, 133, 138, 146, 147, 153, 154, 162, 168, 169, 174, 112, (n=18)	
Hands on experience / hands on learning: 6, 17, 42, 46, 68, 101, 140, (n=7)	
↳ Bunu tercih edebilirsiniz	
No rote memorization: 6, 34, 50, (n=3)	
Appropriate to multiple intelligence theory: 6 (n=1)	
Enhances ICT usage: 6 (n=1)	
Enhances social skills: 9, 16, 174 (n=3)	
Active learning: 12, 13, 16, 41, 72, 75, 81, 84, 88, 90, 91, 94, 95, 106, 107, 134, 147, 149, 151, 165, 166, 167, 169, 170, (n=24)	
Student centeredness (understanding): 14, 39, 41, 42, 44, 45, 62, 65, 66, 68, 76, 79, 84, 85, 87, 89, 112, 113, 116, 137, 138, 141, 148, 150, 153, 154, 157, 159, 162, 164, 170, (n=31)	
← Variety in objectives: 18 (n=1)	
← International values: 20 (n=1)	
← Geçitlilik Duru yapacak söylenmiş. Dikkat et	
Enhances critical thinking: 112 (n=1)	
Self expression ability: 113 (n=1) → Bunların quote'larını örnek verebilirsin ↓	
Creativity: 168, (n=1)	
Emphasis on individual: 173 (n=1)	

Figure 9. Sample cross check.

OBJECTIVES

Teacher Educators Perceptions

(n=5) Parental support/role (achievement of objectives): 1, 3¹ } 4, 5, 6 } altında kazanımların
içerisinde!
(n=1) philosophy of the curriculum; 4, 5
(n=2) students' real lives; 4, 6
(everyday lives)

CONTENT

Teacher Educators Perceptions

Local conditions (appropriateness): 3, (n=1)
needs
Flexible curriculum: 1, 4 (n=2)
SBS exam: 3, 6 (n=2)
parental support: 5 (n=1)

Figure 11. Sample cross-check.

APPENDIX K:
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT
PARTICIPANT CLASSROOM TEACHERS WITH RESPECT TO PLACE
OF WORK

	Place of work								Total n	Total %
	Kars	Akyaka	Arpaçay	Digor	Kağızman	Sarıkamış	Selim	Susuz		
<u>Highest academic degree gained</u>										
Associate degree	17	0	4	0	0	3	2	0	26	14.69
Undergraduate	92	6	4	4	4	19	9	4	142	80.23
Master	7	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	9	5.08
Doctorate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Faculty of graduation</u>										
Education faculty	84	3	3	5	4	15	10	4	128	72.32
Science and arts faculty	6	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	9	5.08
Education college	6	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	11	6.22
Education institute	13	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	16	9.04
Other	7	2	3	0	0	1	0	0	13	7.34
<u>Credential</u>										
Elementary school teaching	99	3	5	5	4	15	10	4	145	81.92
Other	17	3	3	0	0	8	1	0	32	18.08
Total	116	6	8	5	4	23	11	4	177	100.00

APPENDIX L:
TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF PARTICIPANT CLASSROOM TEACHERS
WITH RESPECT TO PLACE OF WORK

	Place of work								Total n	Total %
	Kars	Akyaka	Arpaçay	Digor	Kağızman	Sarıkamış	Selim	Susuz		
<hr/>										
Total experience (in years)										
1-5	18	1	2	3	1	4	5	2	36	20.34
6-10	37	1	1	2	3	9	5	1	59	33.33
11-15	21	4	1	0	0	2	0	1	29	16.38
16-20	20	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	23	12.99
21-25	6	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	9	5.08
26-30	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	3.95
31-35	8	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	13	7.34
36-40	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	.56
<hr/>										
Kars experience (in years)										
1-5	32	1	2	4	3	8	9	2	61	34.46
6-10	40	2	1	1	1	8	1	2	56	31.64
11-15	19	3	1	0	0	3	0	0	26	14.69
16-20	20	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	21	11.86
21-25	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	2.26
26-30	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1.69
31-35	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	5	2.82
36-40	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	.56
<hr/>										
Experience in current school (in years)										
1-5	84	4	3	5	4	16	10	4	130	73.45
6-10	18	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	23	12.99
11-15	7	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	11	6.21
16-20	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	6	3.39
21-25	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	6	3.39
26-30	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	.56
Total	116	6	8	5	4	23	11	4	177	100.00

