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GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS' VİEWS ON THE REVİSED HİGH SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY CURRİCULUM

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Abstract

Problems are experienced in geography teaching in almost all countries. Modifications made to curriculums from time to time aim to meet the expectations of the community and the Ministry of National Education in the fields of education considered problematic. The purpose of the geography teaching is to bring up individuals that are responsible, know their country and environment, have knowledge of the wealth as well as the problems of their country, and that produce solutions for the problems. To this end, the curriculums are reviewed from time to time, and revised taking into consideration the changing conditions. The implementers of curriculums revised and put into practice in line with the development strategies of countries are the teachers. Consequently, it is important to know the views of teachers and problems they encounter with a view to identifying the deficiencies.

The purpose of this study is to determine the views of teachers, who implement the high school geography curriculum prepared in 2005 with a constructivist approach, about the curriculum itself, and to identify the differences of the new curriculum from the classical geography curriculums by manifesting the positive and negative aspects of the new curriculum.

Personal information test created by the researcher obtaining specialist opinions, as well as the open-ended questions aimed at determination of some characteristics of the curriculum were used for obtaining data, and also information obtained from face-to-face interviews were utilized.

As a result, it is seen that the new geography curriculum has very significant differences from the previous curriculums in terms of the contents and the teaching strategies, methods and techniques, as well as skills. The teachers that are the implementers of the curriculum are of the opinion that the revised geography curriculum places the student in the center, encourages learning by doing, experiencing and exploring, and makes the geography a part of the life itself.

Key words: Geography, geography teaching, teachers' views, geography teachers, revised geography curriculum.

İntroduction

İt is known that there are problems in teaching geography subjects at the primary and secondary education and those solutions are sought for these problems in Turkey, as well as in the world. While some of these problems are related to the curriculum, others are connected with the competencies of teachers and the teaching methods adopted.

The purpose of the geography course is to introduce the places they live in and the world to the new generations, to teach the reasons of differences and similarities on the earth itself and how to evaluate the results of these differences and similarities. Studies conducted show that there are some specific problems with respect to the contents and teaching of the geography courses. İt is understood that some of the problems relating to geography teaching is common in both developed and developing countries. Even though these problems differ from one country to the other, the common problems are mainly related to competencies of teachers, teaching methods, textbooks, measurement and evaluation techniques, and use of tools.

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İt is necessary to review the general situation in some developed and developing countries in order to be able to draw the framework of the problems and to draw attention to the fact that they are not peculiar only to Turkey. Major problems encountered in geography teaching in Nigeria include lack of sufficient number of competent teachers, failure to encourage students to learn the subjects, insufficiency of the teaching materials, and particularly the inability to involve in field works supporting the education *(*Ajibade and Raheem, 1999). İt is understood that problems are experienced in geography teaching at many schools in the United Kingdom. One school director in the United Kingdom told to the branch chairman: "Our teachers spend too much time for field works. Geography can be taught without such things. The important thing is that students know the countries and the place of their capital cities. There is no need to take students to excursions for this purpose." (Akengin, 2007). Bell (2005), who conducted researches in the field of geography teaching, draws attention to the fact that geography is the course that is taught the worst at most of the primary education schools and that the popularity of geography has decreased at the secondary schools. And Leat (1996), emphasizing existence of very good geography teachers, who worked with a great excitement, in England and Wales, points out that teachers created and used simulations utilizing teaching materials of high quality for their students, but that there were serious problems in geography teaching anyway and states that the problem is related to lack of giving sense to geographic aspects and of intellectual development of children in terms of geography. Beth Dye, Chairman of the Canadian Council for Geographic Education (CCGE), says, "Surveys show that the geographic knowledge of Canadian students leaves much room for improvement… İn many cases geographical knowledge has declined over the years, so that many of our children cannot read maps or locate provinces, territories, cities or important physical features. This lack of geographical knowledge is more than an embarrassment; it is a threat to Canada's status in the world community," making the geography education and new generation's improved geography culture a **matter of prestige**.

The problems in geography education in Turkey have been investigated by many researchers in their different dimensions, with the purpose to reveal them. İt is necessary to review all studies conducted in this field as a whole in order to understand the process of creation of the new curriculum.

According to the education researchers, a curriculum should be functional, i.e. the contents of the curriculum should answer the needs of the community, reveal the skills of individuals, be flexible, determine the details of subjects in the light of the developments and changes introduced by the developing technology and science, and provide the opportunity to determine the methods and techniques to be used (Engin, Akbas and Gencturk, 2003). At this point, it is pointed out that the geography curriculum before 2005 were unable to answer the needs of the community in terms of functionality. Demircioglu (2004) makes the following determination in this respect: "İts failure to mention the objectives, which should be possessed by the effective individuals of our age and require top level thinking skills, among the general objectives of the geography course that is one of the fundamental disciplines of the social sciences is important in terms of demonstration of the situation of our geography curriculum."

Akinoglu (2005) reminds that one of the major problems in geography teaching is the "standpoint of students and teachers about the course" and, stating that "students are drowned in a knowledge mass, cannot associate this knowledge with the practical life, and as a result, many students describe the geography course as difficult or boring", he shows this as a reason of why the success rates are low in geography courses. A similar association was done by Tas (2008). According to Tas, "One of the problems in geography teaching is that, as a result of students' failure to have a spatial perspective about the geographical phenomena, they memorize them as plain information simply looking at the arrangement of the facts on earth. And such knowledge would have no significant benefits to students in their daily lives."

While Tumertekin and Ozguc (2000) highlight the importance of the geographical culture with their expression "Knowing geography will not only assist us in understanding the past, but also shed light on the future as well," on one hand, they also state that "knowing the names of places is just one tool of geography", drawing attention to the fact that geography is perceived as it only consists of memorizing the names of the places (Tumertekin and Ozguc, 2002).

Another determination in this respect is "One of the problems that are most complained about by geography teachers is the belief, which is firmly rooted in the minds of the people and in those who are not geographers, that geography is a science that is simply consisted of memorizing the names of the countries, places, mountains or capital cities," (Ari, 2008). When we take into consideration the educational activities and competencies of teachers, we can see that we reach negative results with respect to the meaning of geography for students and in geography teaching. These results show that the geography teaching at schools is rather oriented towards memorizing, lacking creative and independent thinking, and severe and intolerant. This opinion is supported by the fact that many educators and students today perceive geography as consisting only of memorizing the names of mountains, rivers, streams and cities (Akbulut, 2004; Basibuyuk and Cikili, 2002).

No views have been expressed as an answer to the question "Why should the geography be taught, what methods and techniques should be used, what principles should be adopted, and what tools should be used in geography teaching at secondary education schools?" Due to this important method deficiency, it is seen that teachers, who graduate from the geography departments of universities and opt for geography teaching as their profession, render the geography courses unattractive for many secondary education students (Doganay, 2002). Establishing that the problem is not limited to the method deficiency, Doganay (2002) states that method deficiency in geography teaching and attempting to give academic knowledge in the secondary education lead to unreal perceptions, just like the fact that geography is perceived even by intellectuals as a science that is based on memorizing. A study showed that conventional methods (lecturing and question & answer) are used mostly in geography teaching at schools in Turkey (Saban, 2002). Ozturk (2004) established in one of his studies he conducted on "Secondary education geography teachers' competency in using teaching methods and techniques" that "the geography teachers continued using classical methods, but that they have 'never' used the excursion and observation method, which is one of the indispensable components of geography teaching".

Lack of use of indispensable teaching techniques such as excursion and observation in geography teaching makes the geography course monotonous. Existence of many terms, concepts and place names within the contents of the geography course also renders it difficult for students to learn. Furthermore, large amount of knowledge that requires memorizing also renders geography an unattractive course, and makes it misunderstood (Sahin, 2001). İn addition to the above, Yasar (2005) draws attention to the fact that there are problems relating to both the contents of the textbooks and measurement & evaluation with the following statement: "The measurement and evaluation applications in the secondary education geography textbooks are insufficient in terms of both the quantity and the quality of the questions."

The revisions made in the geography curriculums from 1941 to 2005 did not introduce any radical changes and reforms, they rather bore similar features even though some subjects were added or eliminated (Gumus, 2004). İt was failed to reflect the characteristics of the then current age, changing conditions, individual and social needs, and developments in science and technology on the curriculum. These negative developments led the geography to be perceived as a boring course that had no function beyond memorizing the names of places (Engin, Akbas and Gencturk, 2003).

When we look at the framework drawn above, it can be understood that the problems experienced in geography teaching is not peculiar to Turkey only. İt is seen that there are problems with respect to the curriculum, competencies of teachers, teaching methods and techniques, as well as teaching materials in developed countries like the United Kingdom and Canada and in developing countries like Nigeria and Turkey. The curriculum approach was changed and curriculums were revised through review of the primary and secondary education curriculums and also taking into consideration the critiques aimed at the previous curriculums as a result of a restructuring process carried out by the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey covering the entire educational activities.

The purpose of this study is to determine the views of teachers, who are the implementers of, and consequently who know the positive aspects and deficiencies of, the 2005 Geography Curriculum, which has been revised with a constructivist approach and introduces radical changes compared to the previous curriculums. İn line with this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1- What are the views of the geography teachers' on the overall Geography Curriculum put into practice in 2005?
2- What are the views of the geography teachers' on understanding students' attainments in the 2005 Geography Curriculum, and on writing/creating relevant activities?
3- Does the teaching-learning process of the 2005 geography curriculum differentiate from the classical geography teaching according to the geography teachers?
4- What are the positive and negative aspects of the 2005 geography curriculum in terms of attainability of the goal to give students a geographical perspective, according to the geography teachers?
5- What is the level of geography teachers' evaluation of the constructivist approach, on which the geography curriculum was based as a result of the revision made in 2005, in terms of its contribution to geography teaching?

METHOD

The study was based on both qualitative and quantitative data, associating with some characteristics of teachers as the implementers of the curriculum, as well as their views about the curriculum.

Research Population

The research population of this study consisted of 30 geography teachers working at high schools within the jurisdiction the İstanbul Province Avcilar District National Education Directorate.

Some Characteristics of the Teachers Constituting the Research Population

Of the total of 30 geography teachers constituting the research population, 18 were male and 12 were female. 10 of the teachers were graduates of the geography education departments of the Education faculties, and 16 were graduates of Geography departments of the Faculties of Science and Letters. When the geography teachers are classified in terms of the years of service, it is seen that 66% of the research population had a teaching experience of over 10 years, 20% between 1 and 3 years, and the remaining approximately 13% had a teaching experience between 4 and 10 years. Around 73% of the teachers participated in in-service training programs after their appointment as a teacher, while approximately 27% did not receive any in-

service training. Another point that needs to be drawn attention to is that, none of the teachers constituting the research population participated in any courses or received any in-service training as to how to implement the new geography curriculum. 6 of the teachers constituting the research population were receiving graduate and doctorate education. While the percentage of teachers buying popular geography magazines regularly was 7%, of those who buy occasionally was 53% and who never buy was 40%. The percentage of those who frequently followed the scientific developments (about field knowledge and teaching) relating to their own field after their graduation was approximately 27%, of those who occasionally followed 47%, and of those who rarely followed was 27%. Approximately 7% of the teachers thought that the developments in the geography education at universities increased the quality of geography teaching, and 33% thought it slightly developed, while 60% stated they had no idea about the matter.

İn general terms, it is seen that the teachers are optimistic as to how the changes in the primary and secondary education curriculums would influence the quality of education in the next 10 years. Approximately 14% of the teachers stated the quality of education would not change or they had no idea, while 13% thought it would significantly develop. However, the fact that 73% of the teachers had the opinion that it would slightly change is striking. 20% of the teachers constituting the research population answered the question "What can you say if you evaluate yourself regarding your knowledge of the problems in geography teaching and their reasons?", which was asked to obtain the opinions of teachers, who were interviewed about the new curriculum, as to whether they know the problems in geography teaching, answered "İ completely know", 73% answered "İ partly know", and 7% "İ have no idea".

Data Collection Tools

The quantitative data used in this study, which aimed to determine the views of the geography teachers on the geography curriculum were collected by means of the questionnaire forms created for the purpose to determine some characteristics of the teachers. And the data that would constitute the qualitative dimension of the study were collected through answers given to questions on the semi-structured interview form, which was prepared by obtaining expert opinions.

Analysis of Data

The data obtained from the questionnaire forms were processed in computer environment to determine the frequencies, and a content analysis was carried out by interpreting and associating them with the values formed through the analysis of the open-ended questions. Furthermore, the information obtained from the interviews were classified and tabulated. These tables were then combined with the tables created through itemization and classification of the answers given to the open-ended questions. The tables relating to each one of the sub-problems were finalized using the information given to open-ended questions and the information obtained as a result of interviews, and then these tables were interpreted. The professional competencies of the teachers, which were determined through the questionnaire forms, were evaluated by making associations while the tables were being interpreted.

Limitations

The results of this study are limited to the views of the teachers that constituted the research population, and to the fall semester of the 2007-2008 academic year, when the study was conducted.

FİNDİNGS AND İNTERPRETATİON

The teachers were first asked the question, "What are your views about the overall geography curriculum, which was put into practice in 2005? Teachers expressed total of 71 positive or negative views regarding the question. Table 1 shows the teachers' views relating to this question and the relevant frequencies. As can be seen in Table 1, it is understood that the views of geography teachers on the 2005 geography curriculum are generally positive. İn addition to those who stated that the curriculum that forms the subject matter of the study ***moved students away from memorizing (6), placed students in the center (5), is well-planned and its coverage is well-determined***, there are those who said ***efficient in terms of learning (4)*** and ***it encouraged students to do research***. *A teacher, who has 8-year experience in teaching and closely follows the developments relating to his field after his graduation from university, said, "compared to the previous one, the new curriculum is easier for students to understand and is also more enjoyable, but there are too many activities for students to involve.*

Table 1. Opinions of teachers about the overall geography curriculum, which was put into practice in 2005

	f
İt was prepared hastily, there are deficiencies	15
Contains too many subjects, time is inadequate	9
Students are not ready for the curriculum	7
Moves students away from memorization	6
Student-centered	5
Well-planned, its coverage is generally good	4
Efficient in terms of learning	4
Encourages students to do research	4
İnterrupts the continuity of subjects	3
A curriculum that is easier for students to understand	3
There are activities students should involve	3
Aimed at providing skills that can be used in daily life	2
More enjoyable	2
There is source shortage to support lessons	2
There are repetitions (like a repetition of the 2nd and 3rd grades of High School)	2
Total	71

İn addition to those expressing positive opinions, there are also those who negatively stated ***it was prepared hastily, there are deficiencies (15), contains too many subjects, time is inadequate*** and ***students are not ready for the curriculum*** (Table 1). For example, *a teacher, who has 3-year experience in teaching, rarely follows the developments relating to the field after graduation, and thinking that the changes in the primary and secondary education curriculums would not improve the quality of education in the next 10 years, stated "İ do not think that the revised geography curriculum is one that was prepared with sufficient consideration and time. İt is seen that those asserting that the curriculum was prepared hastily and that there are too many subjects and the time is inadequate are teachers with 10 or more years of experience in teaching. And the teachers that received graduate education with or without thesis in their fields are of the opinion that the coverage of the curriculum is good in general, that it encourages students to do research, and aims to provide students with skills that can be used in daily lives.*

The second question asked to teachers was "What are your views on understanding students' attainments in the 2005 geography curriculum, and on writing/creating relevant activities? Teachers expressed total of 22 opinions regarding the question. Table 2 was created based on the answers given to this question. As can be seen in Table 2, teachers are of the

opinion that activities constitute ***the most crucial point*** in providing the skills aimed by this curriculum. Furthermore, it is also emphasized that activities ***consolidated the attainments and ensured comprehensibility of the subjects***. One teacher, who is an education faculty graduate, has 10-year professional experience and graduate degree, drew attention to the fact that "*creation of activities relating to attainments is the most crucial point, and that activities consolidated the attainments*", regarding the attainments and creation of activities. However, it is also seen that there are some problems with respect to creation of activities. ***The limited time both prevents creation of activities and crowded classrooms makes it difficult to control.*** Furthermore, it was also pointed out that some activities are not convenient for application in the classroom environment, and that they lead to boredom among students (Table 2).

Table 2. What are your views on understanding students' attainments in the 2005 geography curriculum, and on writing/creating relevant activities?

	f
Creation of activities is the most crucial point of attainments, attainments are consolidated, creation of activities also renders subjects more comprehensible	7
Limited time prevents creation of activities	4
There are too many activities, they lead to boredom among students	3
They are capable of carrying out analyses and syntheses	2
Crowded classrooms make it difficult to control	2
Some activities are not convenient for application in the classroom	2
There should be more activities	2
Total	22

Table 3. Teachers views on how teaching-learning process of the 2005 geography curriculum differentiates from the classical geography teaching

	f
Encourages research	12
Places students in the center, and renders them active	9
Encourages participation in the lesson	5
İt has become more visual	4
Activities consolidate learning	4
Relieves students from memorizing	4
İt is not boring like the classical system	3
Encourages use of the information technologies	3
Encourages analyses and commenting	3
Encourages observation	3
The new system will be more successful as it is implemented	2
Encourages learning by doing	2
Total	54

As the third question, teachers were asked, "Does the teaching-learning process of the 2005 geography curriculum differentiate from the classical geography teaching?" The views of the research population as to how the 2005 Geography Curriculum differentiates from the classical geography teaching in terms of the teaching-learning process were classified and tabulated in Table 3 above. As can be seen in the Table 3, total of 54 opinions that emphasize the differences of the new curriculum from the classical geography teaching were expressed. The most significant difference expressed is that the curriculum currently being implemented ***encourages students to do researches (12) and to participate in the lessons (5), and places student in the center and renders them active (9)***. One of the most important complaints about the geography courses in the previous period was that it was a *course requiring memorization* (Engin, Akbas and Gencturk, 2003; Sahin, 2001; Akbulut, 2004). İt is derived from the opinions of teachers that the new curriculum ***relieves students from memorizing (4), and encourages***

analyses and commenting. Moreover, the fact that it ***encourages use of the information technologies and learning by doing*** is among the most important differences (Table 3). One teacher, who has 10-year experience in the profession, rarely follows the scientific developments in the field of geography, and thinks that the revisions in the curriculum would improve the quality of education to a large extent, stated, "The previous curriculum attached importance to memorization rather than researching. The teacher and the textbook were in a position that presented the information. Another teacher that has a teaching experience of 12 years, makes use of information technologies during lessons, and has partial knowledge of the problems in geography teaching stated, "*The new curriculum differentiates from the classical geography teaching and curriculum in terms of its aspects that require research, investigation and use of information technologies, and that encourage students to ask questions, find the information themselves, and to learn by doing.*"

Table 4. The ***positive*** aspects of the 2005 geography curriculum in terms of attainability of the goal to give students a geographical perspective, according to the geography teachers

	f
Student-centered	8
Encourages research	6
Beyond memorization, aimed at learning by doing	5
Encourages investigation	5
Ensures permanency of attainments	4
Aims to give a geographical perspective to everyone	3
Creates active learning environment	3
Teaches that geography is a part of the life itself	3
Encourages use of technology	3
Total	40

The fourth question asked to teachers was "What are the positive and negative aspects of the 2005 geography curriculum in terms of attainability of the goal to give students a geographical perspective? Teachers expressed 40 positive and 24 negative opinions in response to this question. The curriculum prepared in conformity with the constructivist education approach aims to attach importance to student activity. İt is understood that this is also seen by teachers and, when compared with the previous curriculum, the most important positive aspect is its being student-centered (Table 4). İn addition to curriculum's being ***student centered (8), the fact that it encourages research (6), aims at learning by doing and experiencing (5), ensures permanency of attainments,*** and ***teaches that geography is a part of the life itself*** are counted among the major positive aspect of the new curriculum. 8/10 of the teachers that constitute the research population expressed positive opinions about the curriculum in general in different respects. The positive opinion of a teacher, who has 10-year professional experience, graduated from the Geography department of the Faculty of Science and Letters, has never received in-service training, does not use information technologies during lessons, rarely follows the scientific developments in the field following graduation from the university, is as follows: "*There is no obligation for everyone to be a geographer, but regardless of what profession they choose, they should have a geographic view; in my opinion, the curriculum is positive in terms of providing this.*"

When we look at the negative aspects, it is striking to see that there are no negative views regarding the contents of the curriculum, and that the negativities expressed are mainly related to implementation of the curriculum, not the curriculum itself. The most noteworthy negativity is the fact that students, who are not accustomed to the new system, have not embraced the new curriculum. As can be seen in the Table 5, ***the fact that students are not***

accustomed to the system (9) is considered by teachers as the most important negativity in provision of a geographical perspective.

Table 5. The ***negative*** aspects of the 2005 geography curriculum in terms of attainability of the goal to give students a geographical perspective, according to the geography teachers

	f
Students that are not accustomed to the system, therefore they do not like it	9
İnadequacy of technology at schools	4
Teachers' lack of knowledge about the system	3
İnadequate time	3
İnadequacy of the infrastructure for implementation	3
Crowd of classrooms renders implementation difficult	2
Total	24

When the finding given in Table 1 and Table 5 are considered jointly, it is seen that the major problems relating to the curriculum are ***inadequacy of information technologies and infrastructure at schools, the number of subjects within the scope of the course is rather high and the time allocated for the lessons is inadequate, the continuity of subjects are interrupted, repetition of some subjects, and teachers' lack of knowledge about the system***. As mentioned under the section titled "*Some Characteristics of the Teachers Constituting the Research Population*", teachers stated that they received no in-service training in relation to implementation of the new curriculum. The fact that this situation is expressed as "teachers' lack of knowledge about the system" among the negative aspects of the curriculum entails in-service training aimed at implementation of the curriculum. Additionally, when we look at the professional competencies of the teachers that have negative opinion about the curriculum, we see that 75% of these teachers have over 10 years of teaching experience, 80% do not follow the scientific developments in their fields and the developments in the field of teaching, and that they do not follow any popular geography publications. The answer "İ partly know the problems and their reasons" given by all teachers that expressed a negative view about the curriculum to the question, "What can you say if you evaluate yourself regarding your knowledge of the problems in geography teaching and their reasons?" supports the emphasis we put on in-service training above.

Table 6. Scores given by teachers in terms of the contribution of the geography curriculum revised in 2005 to geography teaching

Points	f	%
1	2	6,7
2	-	-
3	16	53,3
4	8	26,7
5	4	13,3
Total	30	100,0

İn the study, the geography teachers were asked to evaluate the constructivist approach, on which the geography curriculum was based as a result of the revision made in 2005, in terms of its contribution to geography teaching, and give scores between the lowest 1 and highest 5 points. As can be seen in Table 6, two teachers (6%) gave 1 point, 16 teachers (53%) gave 3 points, 8 teachers (27%) gave 4 points, and 4 teachers (13%) gave 5 points. When we have an overall look at the table, the fact that the points given were mainly 3 and above indicates that it conforms to the positive standpoint about the curriculum as a whole. Among common characteristics of those that gave 4 and 5 points are that they have 10 years and above

experience in teaching, 4 of them completed graduate programs with or without thesis, and that those that received in-service training.

Discussion and Conclusion

When the study is considered in whole, it can be seen that the geography teachers' opinions about the 2005 Geography Curriculum is generally positive. Furthermore, when compared with the geography curriculum implemented before 2005, it is also seen that the geography course has finally had a curriculum. Because, the following determination made in a study conducted by Buldan, Oban and Bilgin (2003) about the curriculum implemented before 2005 draws attention: "The reasons why the geography education is given, general goals, purpose of the course by units and the targeted behaviors of these goals, teaching methods, teaching tools, recommended teaching periods by units, and evaluation questions were not designated in any curriculums to date. Due to such deficiencies, the previous geography programs of study did not have a curriculum nature."

İt is also seen that there is relation between the competencies of teachers and positive view about the curriculum. Teachers that received graduate education with or without thesis are generally of the opinion that the scope of the curriculum was favorable, that it encouraged students to do research, and it aimed to provide students with the skills that can be used in daily lives.

Teachers are of the opinion that activities constitute ***the most crucial point*** in providing the skills aimed by this curriculum. Furthermore, it is also emphasized that activities ***consolidated the attainments and ensured comprehensibility of the subjects***. This determination is also in conformity with the goal of "providing students with the required knowledge and skills through in-class activities and transferring the knowledge to other circumstances", which is one of the objectives of the new curriculum (TTKB, 2005).

One of the most important complaints about the geography courses in the previous period was that it was a course requiring memorization, and that it did not attach importance to research, but memorizing (Tas, 2008; Tumertekin and Ozguc, 2002; Ari, 2008; Akbulut, 2004; Basibuyuk and Cikili, 2002). According to the teachers, the most important difference of the 2005 Curriculum from previous ones is that it encourages research and participation in the lesson, and places students in the center and renders them active.

According to the 2005 Geography Curriculum, teachers should know and apply a number of learning and teaching techniques in line with the constructivist approach. Teachers are expected to use many techniques such as lecturing, discussion, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, and investigative learning, etc. during lessons (Demiralp, 2007). However, as mentioned under the section titled "*Some Characteristics of the Teachers Constituting the Research Population*", it is understood that teachers received no in-service training in relation to implementation of the new curriculum. Consequently, one of the negative aspects relating to the implementation of the curriculum is determined to be "teachers do not know the system, which is desired to be implemented/is implemented, well".

İt is striking to see that the negativities expressed by teachers with respect to the attainability of the goal to give students a geographical perspective under the 2005 Geography Curriculum are mainly related to implementation of the curriculum, not the curriculum itself.

Results of a study conducted by Akyol (2003) indicated that students believed the necessity of the geography course and its connection with the life itself, but that they did not know how to establish this connection. The teachers constituting the research population stated that there was a significant improvement in this matter, and that the new curriculum aimed learning by doing, permanency of attainments, and teaching that geography is part of the life itself. Furthermore, according to the teachers, this curriculum gives the consideration of "there

is no obligation for everyone to be a geographer, but regardless of what profession they choose, they should have a geographic view."

With the new curriculum, the role and responsibility of students have changed. The purpose of the curriculum is "to create a new level of understanding through learners' applying the knowledge they acquire and new situations they learn about their lives within a new learning process and by combining the two types of knowledge in their minds" (Yanpar, 2006). Nevertheless, teachers indicate that students at high schools were not accustomed to the system in the 2007-2008 school year.

The fact that textbooks were the most basic learning tools and materials was one of the most important problems of the previous curriculum (Demiralp, 2007). One of the significant findings of this study is that teachers and textbooks are not in a position to present knowledge anymore.

Furthermore, the fact that the geography teachers are of the opinion that the constructivist approach, on which the geography curriculum revised in 2005 was based, had positive contributions to geography teaching is in conformity with the positive point of view regarding the curriculum as a whole.

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