
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE SCIENCE COURSE BETWEEN 1923-1938

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Introduction

After national independence war, rapid transformation from imperialism to republic broke out in Turkish society. In this transformation it was aimed to bring up individuals who possess citizenship consciousness, could participate political, economic, and cultural life (Topkaya & Burak, 2018). Education has become a key instrument in mission of raising individual adopting ideals of the republic. Young republic was attempting to meet basic needs such as teacher employment, meanwhile it was making structural transformation in education. Tevhid-i Tedrisat Law which was enacted on 3rd of March 1924 is one of the structural transformations. This Law established basis for development of instructional curriculums which is consistent for expectation and needs of the republic by clustering all of the educational institutions under the Ministry of National Education (Gözütok, 2003; Aslan, 2011). The stage system which had been administered in Ottoman primary schools was abolished and primary school system was reconstructed. In this context, five grades as an integrity was accepted in primary schools and instructional curriculums were designed along with this integrity (Gürkan ve Gökçe, 1999). 1924 Instructional Curriculums of Primary Schools, the first instructional curriculum, is transitional curriculum (Tazebay, 2000). Therefore, there was no specific section for Life Science Course. In the Imperialism Period, Investigation of Nature, Health, History, Geography, Citizenship Knowledge and Moral Discourse include instructional topic of Life Science (Şahin, 2009). According to this, total of the courses can be considered as basis of the Life Science Course. Distributions of Weekly Course related to , Investigation of Nature, Health, History, Geography, Citizenship Knowledge and Moral Discourse were indicated in Table 1.

According to weekly course distribution indicated in Table 1, while Investigation of Nature, Health, Citizenship Knowledge and Moral Discourse were instructed within the first two grades in the context of Life Sciences, History, Geography courses were added in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. The course of Investigation of Nature, Health was taught for 4 course hours in a week in the 1st and 2nd years. The same course had 2 course-loads in a week in 2nd, 3rd, and 5th years. Moral Discourse and Citizenship Knowledge conducted in the context of Life Sciences was instructed in one course hour in all grades of primary

school. History and Geography courses was taught for one course hour in 3rd year and planned for 2 course hours in 4th and 5th years. In this context, as a result of integration different courses, course hours of Life Science was determined 5 course hours for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years, 7 course hours for 4th and 5th in a week.

Table 1. 1924 Weekly Distribution of Courses

Courses in the Instructional Curriculum	1 st Grade	2 nd Grade	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade	5 th Grade
Turkish	Literacy	12	-	-	-
	Reading	-	4	3	2
	Writing Rules	-	2	2	1
	Fine Writing	-	1	-	2
	Vocabulary	-	-	-	1
Maths	Writing	-	2	1	1
	Calculation	2	3	3	3
	Geometry	-	-	-	1
	History	-	-	1	2
Life Sciences	Geography	-	-	1	2
	Investigation of Nature, Health	4	4	2	2
	<i>Citizenship Knowledge and Moral Discourse</i>	1	1	1	1
	Quran and Religion Courses	-	2	2	2
	Fine-Arts	2	2	2	2
	Handcrafts	2	2	2	2
	Music	2	2	2	1
	Physical Education	2	2	2	1
Total Course Hours		27	27	24	26
					24

Content, aims, teaching process, assessment and measurement approaches of Citizenship Knowledge and Moral Discourse, Investigation of Nature, Health, history and Geography course which is evaluated under Life Science were indicated in Table 2.

The 1924 Primary School Curriculum is not a complete instructional curriculum. In this context general aims and targets for each course were not stated. However, aims were emphasized in some chapters of *the 1924 Primary School Curriculum* (Bikmaz, 2013). According to *Table 2* development of national identity, adoption of republic citizenship through gaining national values, introducing historical, geographical, economical aspect of the new country were aimed to teach in courses that can be related to Life Science. It can be said that remarkable and general importance was attached to primary school period and Life Science owing to lack of infrastructure that could enable individuals to continue after 5 years compulsory primary school period.

Content of the course that can be evaluated under the extent of Life Science, was built upon information nature and natural life, citizenship, national history and geography

so as to serve aims of primary school and courses. Nature and natural life, one of the content, consists of agricultural knowledge which could allow economic participation. Underlying reason of content on nature and natural life is that Turkish public was still a agriculture society. Contents related to national history was included into the curriculum in order to build a new national identity. On the other hand contents of national geography includes knowledge which introduce country and new structure of the country.

Table 2. Characteristics of Courses Related to Life Sciences According to Their Curricular Elements in 1924 Primary School Curriculum

Courses	Aims	Content	Learning-Teaching Process	Measurement and Evaluation
Investigation of Nature, Agriculture and Health	Investigating foods, dress, animals, plants and productions associated with our common life.	Flowers, fruits, agricultural plants, animals, mature, and food and nutrition.	<p><i>Cases which will be cared:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All of the courses must be taught as it serves students' education 2. The fact that which course has impact on the child's emotional characteristics. 3. Adequate practice must be carried out for children to comprehend what they see, say, and develop their skills. 4. Children's love of nature must be activated in gardening. 5. Teachers must establish connection between children's skills and their cognition to help them understand what they read. <p><i>The Suggested Methods:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Explanation-Discourse *Observation *Investigation *Instructional trips *Comparison *Story *Group works. 	No information was given.
History	Introducing rights and responsibilities to youths with consciences of Turkish Republic Citizenship, indoctrinating moral essences in all of their behaviours, in brief getting them ready to perform their national and moral duties.	The fact that Turkish Republic was found upon rights and responsibilities possessed by Turkish Citizens, concepts of country, nation, state, government, national sovereignty, benefits of republic to public, national independence struggle.		
Geography	Giving information about the evidences occurred after Constitutional Monarchy as possible as children find interesting, explaining great persons and heroic stories which took place between starting of national independence movement and declaration of Republic..	Important events such as life and civilisations of ancient Turks, their conversion to Islam, Turkishasition of Anatolia; Ottoman Empire, Its history, culture and civilisation; national transition period after national independence movement and establishment of New Turkish Republic.		

According to Table 2, learning and teaching process was not clearly emphasized in *the Primary School Curriculum*. However, a guide for teachers on how to instruct was written by a commission in 1923 and this guide partially reflected on *the 1924 Primary School Curriculum* (Binbasıoğlu, 2005). In this guide explanations and suggestions were made for teachers how they must instruct the courses. Therefore, those explanations and suggestions can be considered as influential for the courses that can be related to Life Science. In the curriculum teachers were asked to arrange instruction for students and take students' interests and skills into consideration. Furthermore, consideration on students' affective characteristics, adequate practice, and student's level, inclusion for story into teaching practices were emphasized. Explanation-discourse, observation, investigation, instructional trips, comparisons, stories, and group works were suggested to use (Bıkmaç, 2013).

There was not any explanation or guide on assessment and evaluations of students in *the 1924 Primary School Curriculum*. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a lack in terms of curricular elements of the courses related to Life Science.

1926 Life Science Instructional Curriculum

Political, economic, and social transformations rapidly continued in young Turkish Republic after 1924. Schools played a key role in reduction of revolutions to Turkish public. Therefore it was inevitable for schools to comply with revolutionary movements. Consequently new instructional curriculums were needed. On the other hand, expertise support was remarkably necessary due to requirement of the period. John Dewey, who was prominent expert, was invited and John Dewey accepted the invitation and investigated, and prepared an report and submitted. Dewey offered integrated instruction and practice school concepts. Geography, history, Investigation of Nature, Health, and Citizenship Knowledge and Moral Discourse were integrated (Gülaydın, 2002; Akman and Patoglu, 2016). Some of aforementioned courses were abolished and included and re-programmed into Life Science in 1st year, 2nd year, and 3rd year along with integrated instruction by Dewey. Connection table establishing inter-disciplinary relation between Life Science and the courses was constructed (Tay & Baş, 2015). Because whole perception that is developmental characteristics of primary school children was cared (Binbasıoğlu, 2003). As a result, Life Science became a central course. Weekly course hours' distribution was indicated in Table 3.

Tablo 3. 1926 Weekly Distribution of Courses

Course and Grades	1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	4 th Year	5 th Year
Turkish	Alphabet	10	-	-	-
	Reading	-	4	4	3
	Writing Rules	-	2	2	1
	Composition	-	2	2	2
	Grammar	-	-	1	1
	Handwriting	-	2	2	1
Life Science	4	4	4	-	-
Religion	-	-	-	1	1
Calculation and Geometry	4	4	5	5	5
History	-	-	-	2	2
Geography	-	-	-	2	2
Courses on Nature	-	-	-	2	2
Object Course	-	-	-	-	2
Country Knowledge	-	-	-	2	1
Drawing and Handcraft	4	4	4	2	2
Music	2	2	1	1	1
Gymnastic	2	2	2	2	1
(Home Management) Girl Schools	-	-	-	1	1
(Stitch) Girl Schools	-	-	-	1	1

As it can be seen from Table 3, Investigation of Nature and Health, Citizenship Knowledge and Moral Discourse courses were discarded, Life Science were added into the curriculum instead of them. The courses which was known as in the context of Life Science in the 1924 Primary School Curriculum, had 5 course hours in a week. However, Life Science was taught for 4 course hours in a week in 1st year, 2nd year, and 3rd year in the 1926 Primary School Curriculum. Investigation of Nature and Health, Citizenship Knowledge and Moral Discourse courses were integrated under the title of Life Science. There was no Life Science course for 4th year and 5th year in the 1926 Primary School Curriculum. Life Science was described as special and specific course for 1st year, 2nd year, and 3rd year in primary school. General purpose, content constituting learning units, learning-teaching process for reaching the purposes, assessment and evaluation approaches testing level of learning were presented in Table 4.

There were not any purpose statements in the 1924 Primary School Curriculum that had been developed previously. However, purposes for each of the courses were included into the 1924 Primary School Curriculum. That can be considered as a remarkable change. This change appeared in Life Science Curriculum. As seen in Table 4, 9 purpose statements were included into Life Science Curriculum for 1st year, 2nd year, and 3rd year. As it can be concluded from the purposes, it was aimed to introduce the self, their

social environment, the country, and the nature to children. Those 9 general purposes contain several cognitive, affective, and motor characteristics in terms of the taxonomy. There were skills and values that were aimed to teach through hidden-curriculum or open curriculum in the 1926 Life Science Curriculum

Table 4. Characteristics of Life Science According to Their Curricular Elements in 1926 Primary School Curriculum

Purposes	Contents	Learning-Teaching	Assessment and Evaluation
<i>Purposes :</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>Teaching Principles:</i>	
1. Introducing stone, mine, plant and animals which is in the settings; getting students investigate and explain natural events, living conditions of organisms and relationships among organisms	Our School, Our Home and Family, **Autumn , **Republic Fest, **Winter, **Spring, **Summer.	* Principle of teaching from close to distant. * Association with real life. * Individual and collective interest. *Principle of adequate time (eclipse of the sun or lunar eclipse so on.) *Flexibility to geographical region.	There is no explanation for assessment and evaluation in the 1926 Primary School Curriculum.
2. Presenting impact of mankind on the nature due to opening up canals, feeding animals, planting forests, farming, building ways.			
3. Getting students investigate activities of society; teaching rapidly family, town, municipality, and government.			
4. Getting children investigate human body, functions of human body organs through observation and practices	<i>* * Units presented as ** are assigned to each of the first three grades. Other two units are taught in only 1st year.</i>	<i>Teaching Methods:</i> *Group work *Explanation *Discussion *Instructional trip * Observation and investigation *Practice *Experiment	However, a regulation was published in 1928 and it was suggested that testing knowledge can carried out through opinion mark three times in a year, and student's production .
5. Giving moral advices by discussing events occurring in school, family and society and story texts.			
6. Making preparation to history by investigating close environment of school and historical structures and personalities in close environment of school			
7. developing children's observation and investigation skills, meanwhile getting them accustomed to stating what they see, know, and practice.			
8. Strengthen solidarity and cooperation among students through the time which they spend together.			
9. Getting children picture, farming and collections about Life Science make, activating them to work themselves, giving desire and pleasure to work.	Our behaviours in classroom , school and out of school, our home, direction between home and school and encountered elements, our body and cleaning, farming, and the time spent in field. Seasons, vine, garden, visit of carpenter, and hammer smith, our winter dress, government, post, telegraph, health organisation, major diseases, agricultural experience on the school field, forests, eclipse of the sun, stars and so on.		

As it can be seen from Table 4, content of Life Science course was constructed through unit-based approach. *Autumn, Republic Feast, Winter, Spring, and Summer* units were commonly carried out in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. In addition that *Our School, Our Home, and Our Family* were included for 1st year. Topics included by units were designed through understandings based on close settings and time approach. Moreover, the titles, compounds of the contents, reflect characteristics of the time period. For instance, Government *Organisation* title served to get students adopt political structure, while *Post and Telegraph* was designed so as to introduce communication technology of the time period. Therefore, it can be stated that the contents was designed along with realities

of the time period.

According to Table 4, the 1926 Life Science course curriculum includes principles about learning-teaching process and instructional strategies that could be used by teachers. *From close to distant, association with life, individual and collective interest, and suitable time* can be thought as principles which teachers must care. Moreover instructional applications were emphasized by taking local conditions, experiential learning, social settings into consideration (Baymur, 1937; Şahin, 2009; Uçar, 2004). Especially observation of events such as solar eclipse, agricultural applications in school field, observation of crafts such as carpentry and iron smith in suitable place, design of group work, learning opportunities such as experiments based on experience were highlighted. According John Dewey, visited Turkey in 1924, school is life itself and learning takes place through experience (Sönmez, 1924). Consequently, influence of John Dewey emphasizing experiential learning can be observed on the 1926 Life Science Primary School Curriculum.

There is no explanation on how student achievement is assessed and evaluated in the 1926 Primary School Curriculum. Three opinion marks in a year, testing previously learning and students products were considered as the ways of assessment and evaluation in Regulation of Primary School which was enacted in 1928 (Bıkmaç, 2013). According to the regulation, it can be concluded that products, written and verbal assessments were used as the way of assessment and evaluation. On the other hand, the regulation demanded teachers to use opinion marks three times in a year

1936 Primary School Curriculum

After the 1926 Life Science Curriculum, a lot of revolutions that politically and socially built up society came into life. Moreover, country encountered negative events against new political and social construction. Requisites and measures which could reduce outcome of the revolution to the public and prevent negative events brought about change in education. Therefore partial changes were made in 1930 and 1932. However, concern of regime and instruction that was constrained to primary school entailed comprehensive changes (Kültür Bakanlığı Dergisi, 1937). Therefore, lacks encountered in the 1926 Primary School Curriculum, removing incoherency between the school levels, and adoption of revolution through schools was main factors in developing a new curriculum, the 1936 Life Science Curriculum. The 1936 Life Science Curriculum sought out establishing connection between 3rd year, end of the first primary school period, and 4th year, beginning of the second primary school period (Mala, 2011; Kültür Bakanlığı Dergisi, 1937). Weekly course hours' distribution was indicated in Table 5.

Table 5. 1936 Weekly Distribution of Courses

Courses / Years	1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	4 th Year	5 th Year
Turkish	10	7	7	6	6
Life Science	5	6	7	-	-
Arithmetic-Geometry	4	4	4	4	5
History	-	-	-	2	2
Geography	-	-	-	2	2
Nature Knowledge	-	-	-	3	3
Family Knowledge	-	-	-	2	2
Country Knowledge	-	-	-	2	1
Fine-Arts	4	4	4	2	2
Music	1	1	1	1	1
Gymnastic	2	2	2	1	1
Writing	-	2	1	1	1
Total Course Hours	26	26	26	26	26

Life Science would be taught for 4 course hours for 1st Year, 2nd Year and 3rd Year in a week in the 1926 Primary School Curriculum. However, as it can be seen from Table 5 Life Science was taught 5 course hours for 1st Year, 6 course hours for 2nd Year, and 7 course hours for 3rd Year. Therefore course hour of Life Science in a week increased. Life Science's function to get students socialized can be considered as underlying reason of the increase. Because realities of the time period is taken into consideration, it can be concluded that adoptions of the revolutions by the public was needed. However, vast majority of the public lived in rural areas, mainly villages. Schools were effective instrument to get the revolutions reached to the villages because primary schools covered most of the villages. On the other hand, level of education remained as limited to primary school. Therefore, system primary schools had seminal functions in education systems. Increase in weekly course of Life Science had important implications. General purpose, content constituting learning units, learning-teaching process for reaching the purposes, assessment and evaluation approaches testing level of learning were presented in Table 6.

There were nine purpose statements in the 1926 Life Science Curriculum for 1st Year, 2nd Year, and 3rd Year. However, there were five purpose statements in the 1936 Life Science Curriculum as it can be seen from Table 6. Therefore, it can be said that purposes were more simplified. Close history conscience, knowing the country and the nation, comprehension of nature and natural events were included into the 1936 Life Science Curriculum as well as the previous Life Science Curriculums included. On the other hand, nation and country love was included into the curriculum (Binbaşioğlu, 2003). Adoption of complete citizenship conscience and nation phenomenon can be thought as fundamental reason to this. Purposes include cognitive and affective characteristics in terms of the taxonomy. Although motor skills were not addressed directly, they were

emphasized together with the contents and the learning and teaching process. Moreover, when we address whole of the 1936 Life Science Curriculum, it can be seen that skills and values such as *family, country love, keeping environment and body clean, neighbourhood, relativity, citizenship, respect, altruism, communication, data collection, investigation, research, and observation* were highlighted (Topkaya and Burak, 2018).

Table 6. Characteristics of Life Science According to Their Curricular Elements in 1924 Primary School Curriculum

Purposes	Contents	Learning-Teaching	Assessment and Evaluation
<p><i>Purpose of the Curriculum:</i></p> <p>1. Getting the first three grades students to explain natural, economic, and social life which are possible to be comprehended by them</p> <p>2. Allowing children examine living and environment conditions in terms of geography</p> <p>3. Getting them ready understand historical events by taking their interest to important historical events</p> <p>4. Making them aware of natural beauty and loving.</p> <p>5. Fostering Conscience of devotion to the country and the nation which teach basic responsibilities for nation and country love.</p>	<p><i>The Content Titles:</i></p> <p><i>1st Year</i></p> <p>Our Classroom, Our School, Our Home, Our Family, At Market and Bazaar, Autumn, Autumn in Gardens, Before Coming to School, After Going Out School, At School, At Shop, Winter is Coming, New Year, At Home, Play, Outdoor Winter Entertainments, Nights and Days, Pets At Our Home, Fire, Diseases, Our Body, Animals in Spring, Spring is Coming, Visit, Post, Birds and Other Animals, '3rd April Feast, Summer is Coming, At Bazaar and Market, Summer, End of Instructional Year.</p> <p><i>2nd Year</i></p> <p>Living Holiday, Coming Back to School, Autumn has come, At Market and Bazaar, Autumn, Republic Feast, At Home and School, Preparations of Winter, Our Home and Family, The First Snow, New Year, Winter Entertainments, Winter, Winter Diseases, Care Well Our Body, Our Dresses, Cleanliness, People That Are Come Across At Street, Our Home, Winter Has Come, At Market and Bazaar, Spring, Spring At Street, Spring At Vine and Garden, 23rd April Feast, Military Service, Summer is Approaching, Our Water, and Summer Holiday is Coming.</p> <p><i>3rd Year</i></p> <p>At Our New Classroom, Our School, Our School and Its Close Around, the Republic Feast, Autumn, School Way, Our Home and Family, Street and District in Which Our School is, New Year, Winter, Other Districts in Our Town or City, Our Body, Our Diseases, Charity Associations in Our Town or City, Post, Telegraph, Telephone and Radio, Administrative Organisations of Our Town or City, General View to Our Town or City, Agriculture Experience At School Field and Air Observations, the 23rd April Feast, At Garden and Vine, At Forest, By Our Stream and Lake, Sea, Village, Village Investigation, Our Water, Neighbour Towns, the Sky.</p>	<p><i>Considerations Which Must Be Cared:</i></p> <p>1. Primary school is a national education institution. Courses are an instruments which reach the purposes</p> <p>2. Primary school must be a sample of the society.</p> <p>3. School must offer a framework in which children are encouraged to act, create.</p> <p>4. No opportunity must be missed in order to teach children to judge and think.</p> <p>5. Children's interest must be stirred in order to act on the activity.</p> <p>6. Internal resources must be utilized so as to make them motivated.</p> <p>7. Different instructional activities must be designed, any course must not be instructed with a single activity.</p> <p>8. All of the course must be instructed according to children's level.</p> <p>9. Children must be helped to gain experience related to instructed subjects.</p> <p>10. Close environment and time principle must be dominated in primary school.</p> <p>11. Practical knowledge and skills must be given priority.</p> <p>12. Insight in national economic has key role in all of the activities.</p> <p>13. Whole instruction must be followed in the first three years, which are the first period of primary school.</p> <p>14. Children must be offered opportunities in which they express their emotions and thoughts in different ways.</p> <p>15. Child must learn the rules which help them distinguish which one is moral.</p> <p>16. Habits of effective free time must be taught.</p> <p>17. Ways of effective speaking must be taught.</p> <p><i>Teaching Methods:</i></p> <p>Trip, Observation, Investigation, Research, Exhibition.</p>	<p>Teachers made evaluations by taking explanations from the instructional principles into consideration.</p>

Conclusion

The content of 1926 Life Science Curriculum was constructed through unit-based approach. However, subject-based approach was adopted instead of the unit-based approach in the 1936 Life Science Curriculum according to Table 6. In this context, about 30 subjects were determined for each of the year. However, while some subjects were kept as common for 1st Year, 2nd Year, and 3rd Year and holistically organised, some subjects were dealt with in a straight way. On the other hand, geographical structure which influences close environment of the school was suggested to be addressed together, as a consequence flexibility appeared. For example, *Spring in Vine and Garden* subject which was designed for 1st Year, can be arranged in park if there is no vine or garden around the school. When the subject in the 1936 Life Science Curriculum is generally addressed, it can be observed that there are subjects on school, local environment, nature, natural events, seasons, government organisations, institutions, feasts, agricultural applications, telegraph and post in the 1936 Life Science Curriculum. However, it can be seen that communication technologies such as telephone and radio were included in the curriculum by taking realities of the time period into consideration. It is very interesting to cover military service in the curriculum. This may have stemmed from political changes that occurred in that time in the world.

According to Table 6, 17 considerations which teacher must care, were developed and explained. Those considerations suggest that teachers were asked to avoid sole memorization and cared to give examples from Daily life (Acar, 2011; Ergin, 1977). Therefore, it can be concluded that *individual and collective interest, from close to distant, association with real life, appropriate time* principles were covered in the 1936 Life Science Curriculum. On the another hand, *whole instruction and experiential learning* principles were also emphasized in the 1936 Life Science Curriculum as well as the 1926 Life Science Curriculum highlighted. Furthermore, at the end of the 3rd Year, gradual groups and branches were suggested in order to develop students' skills on investigation events and objects in terms of scientific rules (Cıcıoglu, 1985; Şahin, 2009). As a result, using *research* as an instructional strategy was especially emphasized. This approach can be considered as an aim establishing transition from 3rd Year, end of the first period of primary school, to 4th Year, starting of the second period of primary school. Moreover, for the first time *Teaching Instruments* included course instruments, places for trip and investigation, collections, co-sources in order to enrich learning-teaching process (Mala, 2011).

There was not any explanation about how to assess and evaluate student achievement. However, teachers made case evaluations by taking explanations related to principles and purposes (Mala, 2011).

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