

Teaching Of Geography In Türkiye: New Roles For A Renovated Subject

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Research Problem

- To discuss new and old curriculum within the global age's needs in Turkey and in the world
- To globalize geography in Turkey, new curriculum should be thought as a good chance

- To understand what is the renovated subject and its new roles, it is important to compare with previous curriculum
- The purpose of this study is create a viewpoint of teaching geography in high schools of Turkey about the revolution of new curriculum in 2005.

Research Questions

- **What was The Crisis Of Geography In Turkey in the Past ?**
- **What has The New Curriculum Brought?**
- **How will the Reform continue?**
- **What must be done to globalize geography in Turkey in the future?**

The Crisis Of Geography In Turkey: Lack Of Globalization

- Beginning in the 1950s, Turkey's importance and geographical position between Europe and Asia took on enormous significance, owing to the massive increase in trade between Europe and the Middle East

- With the increasing complexities in international relations and the balance of power between individual nations and geographical regions, the requirements for the teaching of geography have undergone massive changes that now require new approaches to reflect the specific needs of the citizen in a world where “***Mankind is a single body and each nation a part of that body***” (1932), as Atatürk (founder of modern Turkey) stated more than seventy years ago.

- this new trend hasn't flourished in order to fundamentally renovate geography education in Turkey. Geography curriculum has been changed a few times between 1941 and 1996. Most of these changes have been evolutionary, not revolutionary (Taş, 2005:36).

- As an academic subject, there weren't enough foreign books, articles and other publications in geographic education. Because of this situation, it was hard to follow the development of this new trend in developed countries.
- As a result, due to the absence of a standard curriculum as well as the predominance of memorization, teachers and students confronted numerous problems at schools.

- As an academic subject, there has not been enough foreign books, articles and other publications in geographic education including Turkish translation of “The International Charter on Geographical Education” (IGU). Because of this situation, it was hard to follow the development of this new trend in developed countries.

- On the other hand, Gerber (2001:19) argued that geography teachers and students in countries around the world will need to think globally if they are to facilitate teaching and learning of, about and for globalization. In so doing, it is their duty to focus on the benefits and the costs of globalization.

- It is essential to deal with two responses to the phenomenon of globalization hold a special importance for the development of geography education in Turkey:
- One of them is the ***International Charter on Geographical Education (ICGE)*** in 1992 and the other is the new ***Curriculum for High School Geography*** of Ministry of Education in 2005.

A Renovation: What Has The New Curriculum Brought?

- the Charter concentrates on three central issues that face every single person living in the *age of globalization*:
- 1. the challenges of the modern world and the responses needed;
- 2. the nature of geography as a subject of education;
- 3. the contribution of geography to overall education.

- On the other hand, The new curriculum of Turkey emphasis that: *“Teachers must make use of the events in and out of the school to show the importance of geography in life. Students must be able to solve problems by learning real life problems and contradictory situations”* (MEB, 2005: 7).

- In this renovated curriculum, there has been an endeavor to help geography education to compare current ideas prevalent in the International Charter on Geographical Education. So it can be argue that it is one of the best reforms about geography education in Turkey.

- Heitman (2003) argued that an innovative curriculum should be responsive to new demands and creative towards new offers.
- According to the new curriculum in Turkey, it can be said that it is responsive to especially GIS and globalization.

- In line with the development of an increasingly mature appreciation of the evolving importance and significance of globalization beginning in the early 1990s, governments, business corporations and other institutions began to modify their policies and approaches accordingly.

The new curriculum includes some learning areas and Objectives:

Table 1. Learning Areas and Objectives in the New Curriculum

<u>Grades</u>	LEARNING AREAS					Total Objectives / Hours per week of Geography
	Natural Systems	Human Systems	Synthesis Of A Place: Türkiye	Global Ambiance: Regions And Countries	The Environment And Society	
9. Grade	15	3	7	3	3	31 / 2 hours in a week
10. Grade	7	10	13	3	3	36 / 2 hours in a week
11. Grade	4	7	10	6	14	41 / 4 hours in a week
12. Grade	3	4	12	9	11	39 / 4 hours in a week

Source: New Curriculum for Geography in High Schools (The Ministry Of Education, Turkey)

- In education and teaching of this lesson “Geographical Abilities and Applications” learning area has been integrated to all teaching subjects and lessons. In the new curriculum we see 8 skills to teach students:

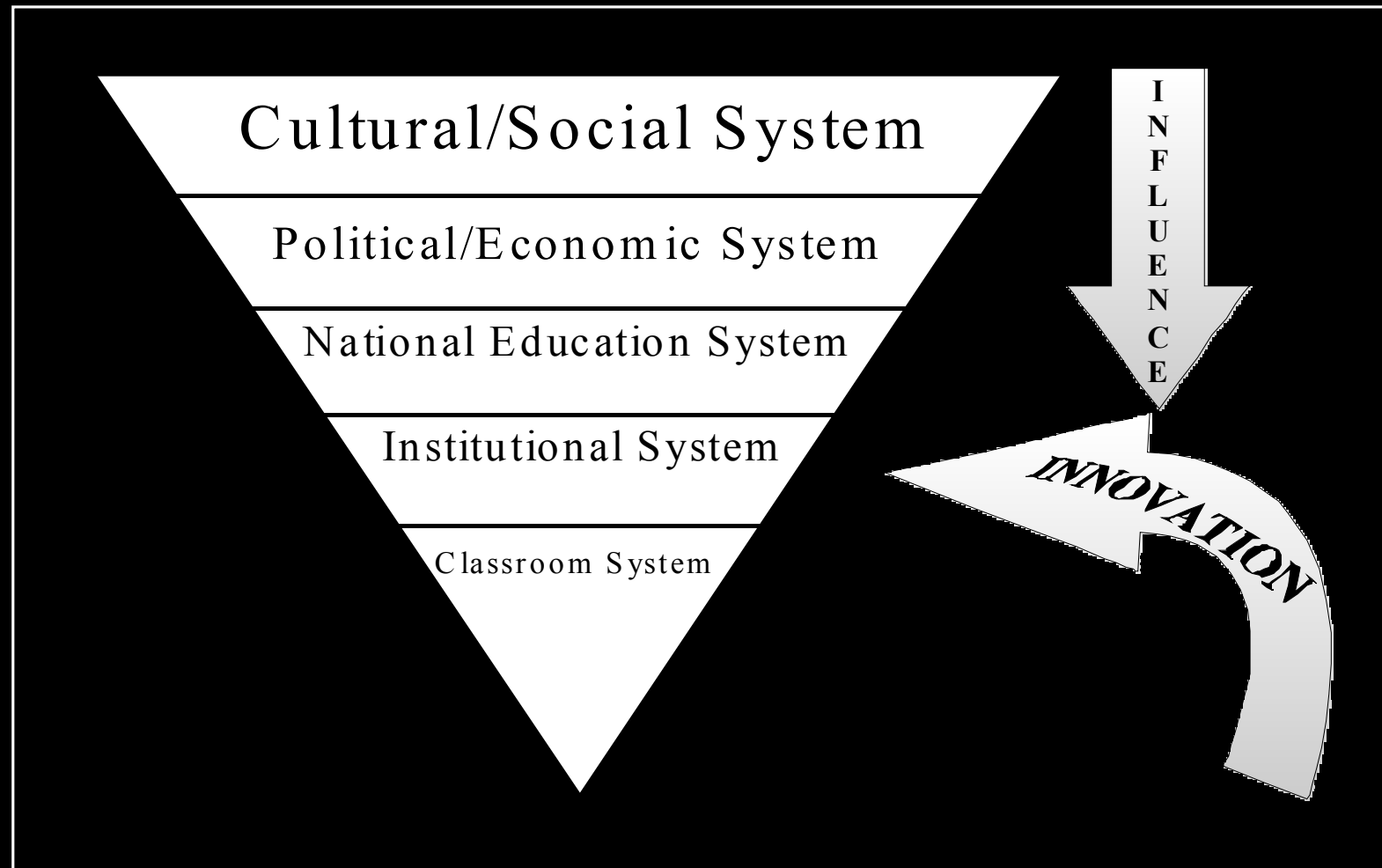
1. Map Skill,
2. Observation Skill,
3. Field Study Skill,
4. Geographic Interrogate Skill,
5. The Skill of Prepare and Explain Tables, Graphics and Diagrams
6. ,
7. The Skill of the Perception of Time,
8. The Skill of Using Proof,
9. The Skill of Perception of Variation and Continuity (MEB: 19, 2005).

- It is possible to say that these skills also carry away the students as international to the five sets of geographic skills as follows (Geography for Life: The American Geography Standards, 1994):
 - Asking geographic questions,
 - Acquiring geographic information,
 - Organizing geographic information,
 - Analyzing geographic information,
 - Answering geographic questions.

Continue The Reform?

- Although new curriculum seems better than previous one, there are still vital problems in the teaching of geography in Turkey.
- White (1995) states that regardless of how beneficial an educational innovation may appear to its creators, the values and history of the surrounding culture must be taken into serious consideration before moving forward with reforms.

Figure 1. The Framework in Innovative Curriculum (White 1995)



- He warns that if other cultural spheres of influence (see Figure One) perceive ELT innovations as incompatible or disruptive to their agendas, reforms will be resisted or modified to fit within established norms (White 1995).
- Turkey should develop its new curriculum as Figure 1. Let's check three most important problems of geography in today's Turkey.

Some Main Problems:

1. The Styles of Different Geographic Learning

- The new curriculum emphasizes that in the geography education program there are following abilities: Critical thinking, creative thinking, communication and empathy abilities, problem solving ability, decision ability, using computer technology,

- The previous curriculum was teacher-centered and based on mostly explaining method. It must be told that training of geography teachers isn't parallel with the new curriculum's skills. Most of them have use only explaining method for many years.

- What will happen in the future then if the teachers can not put into practice truly the new curriculum?
- What are the best and new student-centered methods?
- How can we start to apply them?

These are all problems in front of the new curriculum.

2. Training of Geography Teachers

- The problem of Geography teacher training is maybe the most important problem in this new curriculum revolution if the teachers don't apply the new curriculum and if they aren't educated again as the student-centered and constrictive education.

3. The New Textbooks from the New Viewpoint

- Although the new developed curriculum a variety of educational objectives in geography, a wide range of geographic skills, and the encouragement of the students to do research and solve problems they can not find geography textbooks to develop their selves in the same way.

- Textbooks are used by students to study for exams only not to develop a new approach for their future because of their unproductive contents. Turkey needs to meet new textbooks written by new curriculum and student-centered approaches with its contents as a visual about student activities about world current problems.

CONCLUSION

- There are still important problems with teaching geography in Turkey secondary education although new curriculum's approach,
- There is not enough power to globalize Turkish geography in Turkey,
- Although one of the best and the first student-centred curriculum; New innovative curriculum reform haven't been understood by teacher and people in Turkey,

CONCLUSION

- In Turkey, according to newly curriculum, as the school subject geography's hours were increased,
- Geography teachers must tackle to understand and teach the new curriculum and The ministry of education must help to teachers in this way,
- If the styles of different geographic learning activities, new textbooks written by student-

CONCLUSION

centered approach and training of geography teachers are more important problems which wait as big problems to be solved in Turkey.

- Turkish geography educators and teachers must follow very close international trend of geography to develop and better applications in the new curriculum. Because they are key people to reorganize the Turkish Community as the new global trends and challenges.