THE STUDENT-CENTERED EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

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THE STUDENT-CENTERED EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

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The Student-Centered Education and Knowledge Economy

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Thesis Abstract

Gamze Canlı, "The Student Centered Education and Knowledge Economy"

This thesis investigates the implications and assumptions of the student-centered education model, which was embarked at the primary school level in 2005. The reforms and policies regarding the education models attempt to cultivate a specific model of self as the educated subject, which is envisioned as to contribute to the socio-economic development being adapted and productive. This thesis aims at analyzing the student centered education model from such a view point, acknowledging that it promotes an ideal image of self. It asks the questions what the idealized qualities of self are; who the educated subject is; how these correlate with the current political economy settlement; and, what kind of a rationality of government do all of these establish. Through these questions, it targets to investigate the correlations of the idealized subjectivity in the student-centered education model with the assumptions and requirements of knowledge economy and the neoliberal regime of government. In this framework, the promoted skills and attainments of learners in the curriculum are scrutinized and they are compared with the idealized qualities of a knowledge economy worker which are mentioned in the international sources. Here, the importance and implications of the abilities such as problem solving, learning to learn, creativity, flexibility, entrepreneurship, and communication are discussed. It is also argued that the qualities of self responsibility, self actualization and self consciousness are promoted in the student centered education as the underlying features of subjectivity and government of self. In this respect, this thesis makes the claim that student-centered education model expects to produce self-governing individuals, attempting to establish the neoliberal regime of government in schools. From a more general aspect, this pedagogical arrangement targets to produce ideal subjects for the development and well-functioning of knowledge economy; and, for this purpose, it employs the neoliberal regime of government.

Tez Özeti

Gamze Canlı, "Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim ve Bilgi Ekonomisi"

Bu tez, Türkiye'de 2005 yılında ilköğretim seviyesinde uygulamaya konulan öğrenci merkezli eğitim modelinin varsayımlarını ve önerilerini incelemektir. Eğitim modellerinde yapılan reformların ve politika değişimlerinin amacı, sosyo-ekonomik gelişmeye üretken bir biçimde katkı sağlayabilecek eğitimli özne modelini ortaya koymak ve geliştirmektir. Bu tezin amacı, Türkiye'de 2005'te ilköğretim seviyesinde uygulamaya konulan öğrenci merkezli eğitimin hedeflediği ideal özne modelini incelemektir. Tezde sorulan başlıca sorular şunlardır: Bu eğitim modelinde ortaya konan eğitimli öznenin belli başlı özellikleri nedir? Eğitimli özne kimdir? Bu ideal öznenin günümüzdeki ekonomik düzen ile ilişkisi nasıldır? Tüm bunlar eğitimde nasıl bir disiplin modelini ortaya koyar? Bu sorular aracılığıyla bu tez, öğrenci merkezli eğitimdeki ideal özne ile bilgi ekonomisi ve neoliberal yönetimsellik arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırır. Bu çerçevede, müfredatta öne çıkan beceri ve kazanımlar incelenmiş ve bunlar, uluslar arası kaynaklarda söz edilen ideal bilgi ekonomisi çalışanı özellikleriyle karşılaştırılmıştır. Bu kapsamda, problem çözme, öğrenmeyi öğrenme, yaratıcılık, esneklik, girişimcilik ve iletişim gibi beceriler öne çıkmaktadır. Ayrıca, bu eğitim modelinde, öznenin ve yönetimselliğin temelinde kendi sorumluluğunun bilincinde olmak, kendini gerçekleştirmek ve özbilinç özelliklerinin altı çizilmektedir. Böylece öğrenci merkezli eğitim, okullarda neoliberal yönetimselliği oluşturarak, kendi kendini yöneten bireyler geliştirmeyi hedefler. Başka bir değişle bu pedagojik düzenleme, bilgi ekonomisinin gelişmesi ve doğru işlemesi için gereken ideal özneyi yetiştirmeyi amaçlar; bu amaçla da neoliberal yönetimselliğini benimser.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Concurrent with and mutually related to the political, social and economic
transformations Turkey has gone through, there have been various attempts to
implement reforms to regulate the field of education. One of the recent encompassing
reforms has been launched at the level of primary schools with the introduction of a
new curriculum, which began to be implemented countrywide in 2005. This recent
arrangement of the curriculum is claimed to bring about a new perspective to education
with the purpose of revising the education system according to the global structural
change of the economy and culture. The framework of the reform is mostly inscribed by
the neoliberal talk of adaptation to the information economy and information
technologies. The statistical data gathered through international sources, which indicate
how much the Turkish education system is lagging behind the determined standards, is
pointed out to prove that the Turkish education system requires urgent reforms to
prepare the young generation to the contemporary era as productive agents.

In this framework, the recent curriculum reform is offered as one of the most
crucial ones in the Turkish education history. Principally, it aims to change the entire
educational model at the primary school level. Being compatible with the contemporary
developments in the educational sciences, it is stated to be based upon a distinct
philosophical and theoretical ground that is going to replace the teacher-centered
education model with that of the student-centered. The student-centered education
model suggests that the orientation of education should take the learner as the centre of

attention, and it should focus on cultivating the capacities of students enabling their active participation to the learning process. The idea is to guide the learner to discover the individual ways of learning by motivating the desire of exploration, instead of transmitting knowledge through didactic interaction with the teacher.

This shift in the orientation of education is said to have the assumptions of a particular epistemological perspective called as *constructivism*. Primarily proposing assertions related to learning processes and knowledge acquisition, the constructivist educational perspective essentially suggests that knowledge is constructed by individual perceptions and subjective interpretations of learners. In other words, learning is assumed to be a unique and active process; and knowledge acquires a subjective quality.

Adoption of the constructivist principles and the student-centered education model has pedagogically brought forth a particular conceptualization of "knowledge", "learning", and "self". The aim of this study is to examine how these notions are employed in the curriculum reform in order to investigate the possible shifts of rationality and mentality in the Turkish education system. In this respect, this study does not examine and assess the success of the curriculum change. It does not either problematize the suitability of the student-centered model and the constructivist approach to the Turkish education system. Instead, it investigates the implications of the occurrence of a particular discursive formation in the education system with respect to the ways of social regulation and the notion of "self".

The analysis is carried out by a discussion on the discursive formation of the official texts that both propose and introduce the new education model as an issue of

reform. In this regard, the reform proposals, the reports of the State Planning Organization (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Raporları*), *Tebliğler* Journal (*Tebliğler Dergisi),* and the declarations of the National Education Council (*Milli Eğitim Şurası*) are considered together with the official guidelines, introductory books, and the course programs that are prepared by the Ministry of Education to introduce the essentials of the curriculum. In these official texts the assumptions and suggestions of the student-centered model and the constructivist perspective are manifested. They indicate in a detailed way what is targeted by the curriculum change elaborating upon the differences of the new pedagogical rule from the previous ones. Additionally, they produce a justificatory ground for the reform by emphasizing the urgency for revision, which is based upon the idea of the invalidity of the preceding methods and educational approaches in satisfying the requirements of the contemporary age.

These texts and reports related to the curriculum reform have particular importance not just as the instruments of proposition, introduction, and implementation of the reform; they are also –even more- significant as the discursive sites of the institutional practice. Here, what is meant by discourse is not limited to the use of language. These texts suggest a textual intervention into practice by re/producing judgements on what is necessary and reasonable, what is rational and true, what is just and moral, while excluding the rest of the options as inappropriate, irrational or false. In this way, they generate normative assumptions about the institutional arrangement and functioning, by creating "circumstances in which the range of options available in

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deciding what to do are narrowed or changed."[1] In this regard, these reform texts do not only pose judgements on particular ways of doing; they also produce truth about those choices by classifying them according to their attributed values. As Michel Foucault conceptualizes, production of truth does not mean production of true utterances; rather, it means the establishment of domains where true and false practices can be identified and classified.[2] In other words, the production of truth about something also determines and regulates the domains of the permissible practice.

Curriculum is one of those fields that are regulated in line with the truths generated on the social values and the qualities of self as the educated subject. As Popkewitz suggests, it is a domain where actions are divided as right and wrong according to the assumed social forms implicit in the curriculum.[3] Therefore through the investigation of the suggestions upon which the curriculum reform is rested upon, it is possible to detect those social and moral values and forms that are to create new identities. In this respect, the texts discussed in the scope of this study give significant clues and evidences as to the assumed characteristics of the subjectivities and social regulation; they provide new modes of descriptions such as what it means to be educated, what are the desired features of society, and what are the means to achieve

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[1] Stephen J. Ball. "What is Policy? Texts, Trajectories Toolboxes and." *Sociology of Education: Major Themes. vol. 4*. ed. Stephen J. Ball. (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 1834.

[2] Michel Foucault. "Questions of Method". *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality.* ed. Graham Burchell, et.al. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.), 79.

[3] Thomas S. Popkewitz. *A Political Sociology of Educational Reform.* (New York and London: Teacher College Press, 1991), 22.

these goals.[4] To illustrate, the defined qualities of who are counted as successful and educated determine what and how to teach in schools;[5] so, knowledge is classified according to its viability and validity. Moreover, these prescriptions are in mutual relationship with the proposed techniques and methods of teaching and learning; these methods are also determined parallel to what is taught to whom and for what purpose. All of these pedagogical descriptions and prescriptions actually present a regulated field of educational practice by producing a context "in which to consider the rules and standards by which knowledge about the world is formed with the distinction and categorizations that organize perceptions, ways of responding to the world, and the conceptions of 'self'."[6]

Hence, by way of underlying tropes, description, and assumptions, these reform proposals and introductory texts of curriculum change imply particular ways of construction of self. In this respect, these texts reveal the elements of power in their discursive formation by indicating the ways of producing and disciplining the capabilities of individuals in line with the desired forms of subjectivity.[7] "The exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible

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[4] Stephen J. Ball. "Performativities and Fabrications in the Education Economy". *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Sociology of Education*. ed. Stephen J. Ball. (New York and London: Routledge Falmer, 2004), 143.

[5] Lynn Fendler. "What is it Impossible to Think? A Genealogy of the Educated Subject" *The Foucault's Challenge"*. ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz and Marie Brennan. (New York and London: Teachers College University, 1998), 41.

[6] Popkewitz, S. Thomas. *A Political Sociology of Educational Reform*. 15.

[7] İbid., 3.
   Lynn Fendler. "What is it Impossible to Think? A Genealogy of the Educated Subject". 41.

outcome."[8] As Foucault claims, this is not necessarily a repressing feature of power; it is actually productive to generate subjectivities. It aims to augment some attributes and capacities of individuals, which provide them to exist in society in a particular form of subjectivity. However, the limits of actions and attributes are identified and settled in this act. In the recent curriculum reform, for example, the limits of the attributes and skills that are designated through the ordering act of power are actually determined by way of identification of particular skills and qualities of the self as to be promoted through educational discipline. To put it another way, these skills and attributes to be flourished constitute the desired form of subjectivity of individuals. For this reason, the skills underlined and targeted in the curriculum are significant in designating the idealized image and construction of self, which is indeed a significant clue for understanding the inscription of power in constituting the form and content of the pedagogical regulation. In the present case of the new educational model and curriculum, the skills and capabilities of assumed educated selves are basically related to knowledge production, problem solution, implementing projects, abilities of collaboration and communication, courage of risk taking and leadership. Through all of these abilities and attributes, a particular image of self is constructed, which is actually in direct correlation with the requisites of the existing social, economic and political structures.

Moreover, what determines the prominence of the skills and attributes to be strengthened and what forms of subjectivities to be generated through education is actually conditioned by (and conditions at the same time) the strategies of social and

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[8] Michel Foucault. "Subject and Power" *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 8, no. 4 (Summer, 1982), p. 789

moral government. Government, in Foucault's conceptualization, does not only refer to the management of states; "rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or groups might be directed."[9] Government, in this sense, embodies social and moral regulation through structuring the conducts, qualities, and capacities of individuals. It operates by creating fields of interventions and regulations, the prominent of which is the subjectivity of individuals. It highlights definite forms of morality and ethics, which are to be flourished in individuals as the ideals of social betterment and welfare. It expects subjects to internalize these ideals and aims as if they belong to them and as if these are what constitute them. What should be noted at this point is that the conceptualization of self as the site of the specific regulation and moral government is in an overlapping relationship with the particular image of social arrangement. There is an underlying ideal of society together with the ideal of self, which is to be created not by force, but by production of subjectivities that are equipped with requisite characteristics.

In the context of the recent curriculum change, the ideal self along with the ideal societal arrangement is defined in accordance with the neoliberal politics of knowledge economy. This is, neoliberal politics of knowledge economy is taken as the reference point, which spells a change in the economic structure from industrial development to that of service sector and information systems. It is noted that in order to provide social and economic development in the contemporary age, a different educational system which can provide a labor force that will have the ability to utilize the information technologies and to adapt to the knowledge economy is needed. In this framework, it is

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[9] Ibid.,790.

claimed that the future of the nation depends on this adaptation, in which education has a vital role. On this ground, the cause of the curriculum reform is legitimated with a particular description of the historical and current conditions of economy, politics, and society. The deployment of the reform is objectified as the necessary course of action to respond to the urgent need that arises from a historically specific phenomenon, which is the necessary transition to the knowledge economy in this case. And, it is declared that this urgent need is to prepare children to the post-industrial society with the requisite mental capacities and skills.[10]

Considering all of these aspects of the educational reform that informs a transition to student-centered education model based on constructivist principles, it is possible to suggest that this particular research investigates the discursive formation, rationality, basic assumptions, and themes of this particular pedagogical approach. This investigation is mainly based on a discussion regarding the correlations between the targets of the student-centered education model and requirements of the neoliberal rule of knowledge economy. This correlation is apparent both in the articulation of the qualities, reasons and necessity of the change in the educational model, and in the accentuation of the desired abilities and characteristics of the educated selves. By looking at these correspondences, it is possible to detect how and through what kind of strategies power works, and how it is uttered by idealization of certain forms of subjectivities and social formation.

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[10] Shutkin, David. "The Deployment of Information Technology in the Field of Education and the Augmentation of the Child" *The Foucault's Challenge*. ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz and Marie Brennan. (New York and London: Teachers College University, 1998), 216.

In order to develop ideas and argumentations in the research, document analysis and interviews are used as methodological tools. In order to discuss how the rationality of the reforms is constructed and justified, the reports of State Planning Organization and the decisions of National Education Council are evaluated. Moreover, to introduce, analyze, and discuss the qualities of the student-centered education model, the publications of Ministry of Education are referred. Here, the Introductory Booklet of the Primary School Programs for the first- fifth Grades, the *Tebliğler* Journal, the curriculum, and course programs are investigated. Moreover, through interviews, a deeper insight is gained regarding the features of the student-centered education model along with more detailed information about the preparation process of the educational reform.

In the first chapter of the thesis, there is a brief historical account of the other crucial curriculum and model changes at the primary school level in the Turkish education system. In this part, the historical conditions of the curriculum changes are discussed as well as the underlying rationality of those curriculum reforms. The second chapter introduces the student-centered education model. It is basically devoted to an analysis of and a discussion on the discursive formation and rationality of the student-centered education model. Here, the relation of the curriculum with the knowledge economy is introduced via analysis of institutional documents. It is argued that the discursive formation of the reform is founded upon the requirements of the knowledge economy, which is claimed to be the basic incitement of the transition to a new educational model. Furthermore, the strategies of building specific sort rationality and a justificatory ground for the educational reform are also discussed in this part. In this

discussion, the indicated distinctions of the reform from the previous ones are articulated as the important tools of justification and rationalization. The last chapter aims at elaborating upon the conceptualization of "self" in the student-centered education model. The main target of this chapter is to reveal the work of power in designating and promoting a certain form of subjectivity for individuals, which actually introduces a particular way of discipline and government. For this reason, this chapter is based on an argument regarding techniques of government, which is carried on by an evaluation of the promoted skills and attributes of an idealized educated self.

CHAPTER TWO

SIGNIFICANT CURRICULUM CHANGES IN TURKEY

A historical account of the developments in the Turkish education system is a means to make a better understanding of the attributed roles to education that are identified in a particular socio-political and economic atmosphere. It also helps to follow the shifting rationalities underlying the policy changes and reforms implemented in education according to the determined requirements of the time. In this brief narration of the Turkish education history, which focuses on the period after the foundation of the Republic, the developments in and changing approaches to education are going to be discussed specifically through their influence on the primary school educational programs.

In the first years of the Republican period, the primary target in the field of education was to create a secular and centralized education system. In accordance with this purpose, the Law of Unification of Education *(Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu)* was enacted in 1924, through which all kinds of schools were made liable to the Ministry of Education. In this way, all of the *medreses*, which were the traditional education institutions based on religious doctrine in the Ottoman period, were closed; and a secular program was launched in the schools. In this period, a vital role was attributed to education in line with the efforts to create a new citizenry who internalized the principles of the republic and who could actively participate in the process of the development of the recently founded state. All attempts were in the purpose of providing a political and social transformation, replacing the dominance of religious

doctrines with the validity of positivist and secular approaches in the fields of law, culture, education and politics.[11] The basic aim of the *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Law*, in this respect, was to create a shared national culture through common education based on secular and positivist principles and to raise a generation that had the capacity and will to elevate the values of the regime.

In the same period, in order to create a modern and consistent education program, several scholars from the different parts of the world were invited to Turkey for consultation. One of the most famous professors in the field of educational sciences John Dewey was among the scholars, whose influence was appreciable in the "Primary School Educational Program" *(İlk Mektep Müfredat Programı)*. What was distinctive about John Dewey's approach to education was his assertion about pragmatism and the role of education in social progress. In one of his declarations, Dewey states that "education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform."[12] In this regard, he assigns a pragmatic function to education, which is to provide both individual and social development. For instance, he suggests that:

> I believe that the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situation in which he finds himself. Through these demands he is stimulated to act as a member of a unity, to emerge from his original narrowness of action and feeling, and to conceive of himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs.[13]

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[11]Fatma Gök. "75 Yılda İnsan Yetiştirme, Eğitim ve Devlet" *75 Yılda Eğitim.* ed. Fatma Gök. (İstanbul:Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999), 5.

[12] John Dewey. *"My Pedagogic Creed". Dewey on Education: Selections.* ed. Martin S. Dworkin. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1959), 30.

[13] Ibid, 20.

What constituted the basis of the principles of the 1926 educational program was John Dewey's idea which considered education as a means of progress by creation of a social unity. This aspect of the 1926 primary school program made it as one of the most significant ones in the history of Turkish education system. The essential aim of primary schools in the 1926 education program was stated as to educate the young generation as good citizens of the Republic who could effectively adapt to their environments and provide support for the progress of their nation-state. The novelty in this program different was the role ascribed to education: solely to gain knowledge and good habits was not regarded as adequate; what was primarily expected from the schooling of the young was to sustain their adaptation to the new social and political atmosphere providing their sincere devotion to the republican values and to develop the consciousness of citizenship.[14]

In these first years of the Republic, another significant enterprise in the field of education was to overcome the high rate of illiteracy, which was regarded as one of the major obstacles for the realization of the modernization. After the acceptance of Latin alphabet in 1928, this issue gained more importance, since only ten percent of the population was literate in the new alphabet. In this mission of increasing the literacy rate, a significant role was given to the National Schools *(Millet Mektepleri)* that offered reading and writing courses to people of all age groups. The Public Training Office (*Halk Terbiyesi Şubesi*) was founded as an institution linked to the Ministry of Education. In 1930s, the Village Education Courses *(Köy Eğitim Kursları),* Public Reading Rooms *(Halk Okuma Odaları),* Night Schools of Art and Commerce *(Akşam*

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[14] Cavit Binbaşıoğlu. "Cumhuriyet Döneminde İlkokul Programları". *75 Yılda Eğitim.* ed. Fatma Gök. (İstanbul:Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999), 148.

Sanat ve Akşam Ticaret Okullar), Community Centres (*Halkevleri)* were opened with

the aim of increasing the rate of literacy while promulgating the ideals and values of the

Republic to the masses. Among these institutions, Community Centres (*Halkevleri),*

founded in 1932, had a distinct role in the Republican Period in performing the

modernization mission. Its objective was to create an integrated nation on the basis of a

common culture and ideals. Since the Republican Revolution did not have its roots in

the masses, the population was to be conceived and integrated to the process of

reforming. In this respect, Community Centres (*Halkevleri)* played a significant part in

reaching to the people from all layers of society and promulgating the belief in

revolution through education. It performed an education campaign in the light of

Republican People's Party's (RPP) six basic principles (republicanism, nationalism,

etatism, populism, revolutionism, and secularism) in all parts of the state.[15]

In these institutions, teachers and other state officials were charged to educate

the population that mostly inhabited in rural areas, and to elevate the consciousness of

citizenship. They were also expected to develop the economic productivity of the rural

population, augmenting the technical knowledge among peasants in various fields from

agriculture to craftsmanship. In these respects, especially teachers were to be the

missionaries of the Republican regime.[16]

1930s were the years of worldwide economic crisis which led in Turkey to the

implementation of the statist economical measures and the transition to the period of

planned economy. In a similar vein, the issue of implementing planned development

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[15] Necdet Sakaoğlu. *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi.* (İstanbul : İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2003), 197.

[16] Ibid.

measures in the field of education was firstly brought to the agenda in the first National Education Council[17] *(Millli Eğitim Şurası)* that was convened in 1939.[18] In this Council, the new primary school program prepared in 1936, which had also a crucial stance in the education history, was also established.

What was distinctive about the 1936 education program was the inclusion of the republicanism, nationalism, etatism, populism, revolutionism, and secularism principles of RPP in a detailed and overly emphasized way.[19] The first aim of the program was identified as to eliminate ignorance and to raise a generation who was strongly Republican, nationalist, etatist, populist, revolutionary and secular. What the critics argued was that privileging RPP's party principles in education pushed the fundamental targets of an education program such as fostering basic knowledge and improving curriculum in its functioning to the secondary importance. In spite of the criticisms, however, 1936 program was carried on being performed without any considerable change until 1948.

One of the crucial suggestions proposed in the first National Education Council was the project of instituting the Village Institutes *(Köy Enstitüleri)* in an effort to meet the urgent requirement of at least twenty thousands of teachers. In line with this determined need, the Village Institutes *(Köy Enstitüleri)* were started to be founded in 1940. Being an important example of the authoritarian, centralist and reformist

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[17] Although establishing planned development schemes in education is firstly discussed in 1939, it mainly starts with the foundation of *Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı* in 1961.

[18] Fatma Gök. "75 Yılda İnsan Yetiştirme, Eğitim ve Devlet". 6.

[19] Adil Çağlar. "75. Yılında Cumhuriyetin İlköğretim Birikimi" *75 Yılda Eğitim.* ed. Fatma Gök. (İstanbul:Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999), 137.

perception of the time, [20] this was one of the greatest projects in the Turkish education history in terms of its scope and functioning. The impetus of the project was to establish an environment in rural areas in which an educational staff could be comprised who were adapted to the rural life and who could organize and contribute to the economic and social development and the transformation of the villages. The prominent objective of the Village Institutes was to abolish the difference between rural and urban life, infusing the reforms to the masses and providing an economic development through the active participation of the population to the economic life and production. Therefore, it was both a cultural and an economic project from which it was expected to create a modern village life where people were both economically productive being equipped with the knowledge and capability to produce their own needs; and culturally integrated to the new modern nation-state enlightened with the Republican ideals. The education system in the Village Institutes was based on the precept of transforming knowledge to consciousness and performing it productively in daily life.[21] In this respect, teachers were ascribed the duty to be the active role models and leaders in villages both as a missionaries of the modernization project and as the agents that had the capacity to create an economic take-off.[22] Until 1948, 25,000 teachers graduated from twenty one Village Institutes, which were located in different regions of Turkey.[23]

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[20] Fatma Gök. "75 Yılda İnsan Yetiştirme, Eğitim ve Devlet". 6.

[21] Necdet Sakaoğlu. *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi.* 244.

[22] Gürsen Topses. "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Eğitiminin Gelişimi" *75 Yılda Eğitim.* ed. Fatma Gök. (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999.), 17, 18.

[23] Necdet Sakaoğlu. *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi.* 237.

Another decision approved in the first National Education Council was related to the education program that was implemented in the village schools. Here, the seven fundamental goals of the previous program prepared in 1927 were accepted once again. These principles were important in understanding the significance given to the development of the villages and the role of education in augmenting practical knowledge in this project. These principles were: Education should be practical and appeal to experience; more than accumulation of knowledge, the target should be to gain pragmatic attainments that could be valid in village life; good habits should be created through education; the primary principle should be to raise the village children who were devoted to the modern, humanist, and national values and who adhered to the target of developing the rural life; these children should be educated for the purpose of gaining the capacity to uplift the conditions in the village; village children should know about their environment which helps them to serve to their villages in the best and most efficient ways; as the citizens of the nation, they should internalize the values of Turkish Republic.[24]

The second National Education Council was assembled in 1943 with an agenda of establishing and fostering a common and shared Turkish culture and a national consciousness. In this respect, the discussed issues were primarily composed of reinforcing and developing moral education, Turkish language, and Turkish history education in the primary and secondary levels of schooling.[25]

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[24] Cavit Binbaşıoğlu,. "Cumhuriyet Döneminde İlkokul Programları". 149.

[25] Necdet Sakaoğlu. *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi.* 249.

In 1948, a new primary education program was launched, which was constituted of the combination of the village school program and the 1936 program.[26] Here, the general targets of national education were stated under four general titles, which were about social life, individual merits, human relations and economic productivity. Under these titles, more detailed explanations were included. To illustrate, some of the statements involved in the section of social life were: the pupil should have the merit and responsibility of being a Turk; s/he was devoted to the republican values; s/he was tolerant with different ideas if these approaches were not dangerous for the integrity of the nation; s/he had good relations with others. These identified targets were also stated in the 1968 education program.

Until 1950, the issue of education took a crucial stance in the agenda of the government, being considered as a significant tool of promulgating the ideals of the revolution in all layers of society and social life, strengthening secularism, enlightening people in the light of modern precepts and increasing the consciousness of citizenship based on a common Turkish culture.

The political atmosphere in Turkey radically altered with the transition to multi-party system in 1946 and the election of the Democratic Party in 1950, which also had great impact on the politics of education. The first deed of the new Democratic Party Government in the field of education was to change the staff of the Ministry of Education. The republican cadre that established reformist projects such as the Village Institutes was replaced with the members and followers of Democratic Party who were

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[26] Adil Çağlar. "75. Yılında Cumhuriyetin İlköğretim Birikimi". 138.

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much influenced by American educational approaches. Following the flourishing relations with America, new notions and projects in education appeared such as "program development", "education of nutrition", "scholarships offered by charitable organizations", "science high school", on which there was a remarkable influence of the market economy approach. In this period, the Community Centres *(Halk Evleri)* were closed down on the grounds that they were making the leftist propaganda of RPP; and in 1954, the Village Institutes *(Köy Enstitüleri)* were converted to the schools for primary school teachers. These changes had a negative effect on the increase of the rate of literacy, leading to stagnation; and in a decade, it created a considerable shortage in the number of teachers. Additionally, since the responsibility of the village population in contributing to the school construction had already taken away with a law enacted in 1942, and as the new government did not allocate enough budgets for educational expenditure, the number of the schools did not grow, which led to a decrease in the rate of schooling. For these reasons, the 1950s were considered as a time of standstill period in education contrary to the first Republican years.[27]

Among the important incidents related to education under DP Government period were the fifth and the sixth National Education Councils assembled in 1953 and 1957. In these councils, issues regarding primary schools, technical vocational education, public education, and private education were discussed. In the fifth Council, 1948 primary school program was revised and it was implemented in the pilot schools in Bolu and Istanbul. However, the expected performance and productivity could not be

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[27] Başaran, E. İbrahim. "Türkiye'de Eğitim Sisteminin Evrimi". *75 Yılda Eğitim.* ed. Fatma Gök. (İstanbul:Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999), 102.

realized in the project that would enable these schools to become laboratory spots for program development.[28]

One of the most controversial educational issues in these years was related to education in religion. Parallel to populist and conservative politics of the DP Government, the number of the *İmam Hatip* high schools[29], which disappeared in the Republican Period due to the low rate of demand, increased. Additionally, the religion courses were included in the primary school program the attendance to which was liable to the demand of parents.[30] Indeed, in 1949, RPP Government had already added religion courses to the forth and fifth degrees elective courses. However, since most of the politics of DP Government were considered as a threat to secularism and the project of modernization, this regulation in the education program faced with harsh criticisms.[31]

Following the military coup in 1960 and overthrowing of the DP Government, the discourse in the politics of education changed. In the government program of the National Unity Committee *(Milli Birlik Komitesi)* that realized the coup, national education was determined as the primary issue, and in the 1961 constitution, educational matters were regulated with an approach that was more libertarian, secular, and socialist. To illustrate, to meet the educational needs and requirements was clearly indicated as one of the fundamental duties and responsibilities of the Turkish state

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[28] Sakaoğlu, Necdet. *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi.* 263.

[29] *İmam Hatip* high schools are the educational institutions which teach the principles of Islam. They are also vocational schools, the graduates of which can be employed in religious institutions as Imams.

[30] Religion courses were removed from the primary school program in 1930. In 1974, religion education under the title of moral education became a compulsory part of the curriculum, the name of which is changed as "moral and religion education" in 1982.

[31] Ibid.

where education had to be free and compulsory for each citizen. It was stated that to grant scholarships and other kinds of help to successful students in need were among the duties of the state. Additionally, universities were recognized as autonomous and self-regulating institutions in the constitution.[32] These are all the regulations that were implemented according to the social-state approach.

On the other hand, the statist developmentalist perspective became dominant in the economy policies, which was also observable in the field of education. State Planning Organization (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*) was established in 1961 to prepare five-year economic development schemes in which proposals related to education were also involved. In the first five-year development plan prepared in 1963, for example, suggestions for economic regulations in the education system were proposed. These suggestions were related to creating resources and increasing investment in education, providing scholarship opportunities, elevating the conditions of common public education, founding new vocational education institutions to be able to increase technical education, developing projects to overcome the shortage of teachers in the primary, secondary and high school levels.[33] In this plan the targeted ends of education were also emphasized. It was stated in the plan that:

> Education is one of the most effective tools of development which is an attempt to reach to the desired life style. To promote the values of the desired life style, to create the individual and group behaviors which can direct society to this target and to change the values and attitudes which can prevent such a development is actualized by way of education. Meanwhile, education is the

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[32] Gök, Fatma. "75 Yılda İnsan Yetiştirme, Eğitim ve Devlet". 6.

[33] Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı. *Birinci Kalkınma Planı (1963-1967)* accessed December 20, 2011 http://www.dpt.gov.tr/

primary way to train personnel equipped with the necessary features and in the necessary number for realization of the attempt of development.[34]

In this way, education was considered as the most effective tool of economic development. Moreover, it was asserted that through education it would possible to change the behavioral patterns of individuals, to increase creative potential and to elevate the capacities and productivity of people.[35]

In 1968, a new primary school program was launched which had distinctive qualities. For the first time in Turkish education history, education of the principles and the philosophy of democracy were emphasized in this program. Individual and social differences of the students were emphasized, which would affect their interests, capacities, and success. Therefore, rather than teacher-centered educational approach, student-centered perspective came to the forth. Contemporarily popular notions and issues such as learning based on experiencing, counselling, evaluation, education of the mentally, and psychically disabled pupils were included in the program. Some of the novelties introduced with the 1968 program were briefly the following: Alongside the general purposes of education, specific aims of primary schooling were added; teaching and learning methods were rearranged according to the principles of doing research, observations, and experiments, which would enable the pupils to be more participant and not just dependant on the course books; a great deal of importance was attributed to

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[34] Ibid. (See the Appendix, p110 for its Turkish)

[35] Necdet Sakaoğlu. *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi.* 275.

problem solving, project works, and counselling activities; more importance was given to the principles of locality and flexibility.[36]

1970s were the years of political instability in Turkey. In 1971, another military coup was conducted which was followed by the increase in politization of the youth. Especially in universities, political polarization was in its peak, which caused the augmentation of violence and chaos among the students and the increase in the severance of the police interventions. In this period, autonomy of the universities was taken back and they were linked to the state's executive power.[37]

The most crucial development in education in this period was the enactment of National Education Basic Law *(Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu)* in 1973. This law was to regulate all issues regarding the education system, based on the general target of the national education which was defined as:

> 1) To raise all individuals of Turkish Nation as dedicated to Atatürk nationalism [...]; as agents who adopt, protect and develop the national, moral, humane, spiritual, and cultural values of Turkish Nation [...]; as individuals who have a free and scientific thinking ability; 2) To prepare the citizens of Turkish Nation for life by providing them the necessary knowledge, capability, and attitudes that can develop their abilities and interests; and to enable them to have a profession which can make them happy and which can contribute to the welfare of the society.[38]

In this law, the principles of elementary and secondary levels of education were evaluated together under the title of primary education, the aims of which were indicated as: "to raise good citizens; to attain basic capabilities; to give national moral

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[36] Cavit Binbaşgil. "Cumhuriyet Döneminde İlkokul Programları". 157.

[37] Fatma Gök. "75 Yılda İnsan Yetiştirme, Eğitim ve Devlet". 7.

[38] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Mevzuat. "Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu". accessed January 30, 2012. http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/88.html (See the Appendix, p110 for its Turkish)

education; to educate according to the interest and capacities of the pupils; to be prepared for life and higher education". These identified targets entailed the ones determined in the 1968 primary school program; but in a more general and less detailed way.[39]Additionally, nothing is determined and indicated in the law regarding the issues of how to create budget for education. While principles such as equality of men and woman, human rights, democratic education, secularism, the importance of the individual differences, to provide adaptation of the programs and techniques to the scientific precepts, to elevate the standards of school buildings and the personnel, to plan the balance of the labor force, and the labor requirement in education were included in the law, there was not a serious regulation about how to actualize these principles. Therefore, in the following years, these precepts were ignored and required budgets were not allocated for investments, which ultimately created a considerable decrease in the quality of education.[40]

Especially after the military coup of 1980, the targets of national education mentioned in the National Education Basic Law *(Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu)* were ignored. 1980s was a great turning point with respect to economic, political and social life in Turkey, which led to remarkable changes in the policies of education, as well. Concurrent with the introduction of neoliberal market economy, privatization attempts in education accelerated with a great speed, which increased inequality in education and led to a decrease in the quality of public schools. Besides, satisfying regulations and measures were not implemented in the field of education to be able to create resources

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[39] Cavit Binbaşgil. "Cumhuriyet Döneminde İlkokul Programları". 160.

[40] Sakaoğlu, Necdet. *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi*. 276

for investments that would compensate for the growing demand of the increasing population. [41] On the other hand, Islamist and nationalist current was strengthened, which also affected the content of education. In the course books and schedules, religious, ethnic, and cultural differences were disregarded, and the principle of democratic education was ignored.[42] Moreover, the ethics and religion courses became compulsory for every primary school student in this period. Scientific and independent studies were hindered in universities under the rule of repressing military regime. Following the establishment of Institution of Higher Education (*Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu*), the autonomy of universities was almost completely taken away.[43] Additionally, as a result of reckless policies that aimed to regulate teacher education, quality of education decreased more. In the previous periods, especially in the initial Republican years, teacher education was regarded as one of the most crucial educational issue. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, the previous significance attributed to teacher education was replaced by urgent, temporary, and haphazard measures implemented to overcome the shortage in the number of teachers which appeared parallel to the immensely growing population.[44]

The historical developments in the 1980s period influenced the education programs, as well, both in terms of the content and the underlying rationality. Following the replacement of national-developmentalist perspective with neoliberal market economy, a shift occurred in the role ascribed to education. Instead of the enlightening

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[41] Fatma Gök. "75 Yılda İnsan Yetiştirme, Eğitim ve Devlet". 7.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Sakaoğlu, Necdet. *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi.* 276

and modernizing role attributed to education, the demands of the market economy gained importance, for which pragmatic and technical knowledge that could provide advantage in the market competition was privileged. On the other hand, rather than improving teaching and learning methods that would encourage critical thinking and creativity, learning based on memorizing was fostered, evaluation of which to be carried on by testing. In program development, recent developments and innovations in the world could not be followed, and enhancement of the programs was not provided, at the end of which the course schedules were loaded with unnecessary knowledge accumulation.[45] Meanwhile, the 1968 primary school program was revised in 1983. In this revision, while the determined general goals of primary schooling were not changed, a new educational model was adopted, through which the goals of each unit of the courses were determined according to the targeted behavioral attainments. However, the expected improving in the program could not be realized.[46]

The attempts to develop an inclusive educational model and a contemporary curriculum gained a new character and direction following the agreement signed with the World Bank in 1990. With this agreement, the National Education Improvement Project *(Milli Eğitimi Geliştirme Projesi)* was launched, which strengthened the entrepreneurial and managerialism approach that presupposed commercialization of education.[47] Within the scope of this project, which was to reinforce the neoliberal

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[45] Fatma Gök. "75 Yılda İnsan Yetiştirme, Eğitim ve Devlet". 8.

[46] Sedat Yüksel. "Türkiye'de Program Geliştirme Çalışmaları ve Sorunları" *Milli Eğitim Dergisi.* Vol.159 summer 2003. accessed January 30, 2012. http://yayim.meb.gov.tr/dergiler/159/syuksel.htm

[47] Özdem, Funda. "Müfredat Laboratuar Okulları" accessed on December 20, 2011 80.251.40.59/education.ankara.edu.tr/aksoy/ere/fozdem.doc.

politics in the field of education, the revision of the course programs in accordance with a new educational perspective was also included as a decision. For this purpose, with the support of the World Bank, Curriculum Laboratory Schools *(Müfredat Laboratuvar Okulları)* were established in 1994 in order to develop new programs and to try their efficiency by practicing them in these schools.[48] In this regard, in 23 cities of Turkey, 208 schools were determined as curriculum laboratory schools, and the task of preparing programs and to assess their efficiency was assigned to the Center of Educational Research and Development *(Eğitim Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi (EARGED))*.

In an attempt to constitute a contemporary educational program, several standards were determined for the Curriculum Laboratory Schools. These standards entailed regulations for physical and material conditions of the schools along with the educational program and the curriculum. The implementation of student-centered education model in the primary school level was also among these standards. However, its implementation nationwide had to wait until 2005.

As mentioned briefly throughout in this chapter, before the application of the student-centered education model in 2005, there occurred four basic changes of primary school educational program and curriculum. These were the changes realized in the years 1924, 1936, 1948, 1963. Each of the curriculums and educational programs introduced in these years had different political, social, and economic motives that were influential in the determining and shaping the educational policies. The primary school program of 1924 was regarded as one of the fundamental building stones of the national

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[48] Ibid.

consciousness and identity, having the aim of prevailing the Republican values and generating a devoted generation. The 1936 curriculum was based upon the RRP principles of republicanism, nationalism, etatism, populism, revolutionism, and secularism. In this sense, it reflected the impact of the basic principles of the Republican ideology that was promoted by the RPP government. 1948 program entailed a combination of the village school curriculum with that of 1936. The importance of it lies in the way the aims of the primary schooling were listed and articulated. In the 1963 program, the idea of democracy was firstly emphasized and it entailed the principles of student-centered approach. However, the main transition to the student-centered education model in theory and practice along with the adoption of the specific philosophical stance as constructivism has been fulfilled in 2005, which is regarded as one of the outstanding changes in the Turkish education system. In the following parts, the qualities of this particular educational approach are going to be examined through a discussion on its discursive formation, rationalization and justification techniques, and its distinguishing aspects.

CHAPTER THREE

DISCURSIVE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDENT CENTERED

EDUCATION MODEL

The program improvement attempts in accordance with the principles of the modern age of globalization of knowledge and information technology have already been put into practice with the implementation of the Curriculum Laboratory Schools. However, the main studies of developing a new educational model with new course programs are launched with the initiation of the Ministry of Education in 2003 (interview data). Within the scope of the studies and research, the Curriculum and Instruction Committee *(Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu)* starts firstly to work on the primary school program, which is followed by that of the secondary school. Before nationwide implementation, in order to examine the applicability of the curriculum, a pilot scheme was conducted in 120 schools nationwide. Meanwhile, in-service training activities for teachers pertaining to the new curricular arrangements and the new techniques and methods of teaching were carried out. At the end of the process, the student-centered education model and the new course programs were embarked in 2005 at the primary-school level.

In the Student-Centered Education Application Model *(Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim Uygulama Modeli)*, which was prepared by EARGED, the definition of the student-centered education is suggested as:

> To review the educational process by paying attention to the individual differences in a way to provide the participation of students in every stage and to develop people who have the ability of scientific thinking; who have learnt how to

learn; who are productive; who have internalized the universal values; who can use technology effectively and who can actualize themselves.[49]

The essential target in the student-centered education model is suggested as to enable students to gain the habit of learning by discovering their own ways of attaining and constructing knowledge. In this regard, the interests, capabilities, and performance of students are taken as the primary concern rather than the pre-determined and standardized content of the courses that are to be instructed. In other words, it highlights the individuality of students in learning, which is to be encouraged and strengthened through related pedagogical arrangements and practices. Hence, the student-centered education model targets to regulate the methods of teaching, practices of learning, the content of courses, and course materials along with relations between the teachers, students, and other agents that are included in the schooling process with the ultimate aim of changing the whole perception and practice of education. This attempt towards an extensive renewal of educational practices is therefore asserted as a radical break from former pedagogical approaches and methods with respect to its philosophical, technical, and practical aspects. Articulation of the distinctiveness, novelty, and appropriateness of this new pedagogical regulation has particular importance in grasping the underlying rationale of the reform. However, before discussing and explaining these distinguishing features of the new education model and curriculum together with their implications for the Turkish education system, in the first place, a brief discussion on the issue of "rationality" and "discourse" is going to be carried out

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[49] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Eğitim Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı. *Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim Uygulama Modeli.* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 2007), 2. accessed December 20, 2011 http://earged.meb.gov.tr/arasayfa.php?g=33 (See the Appendix, p110 for its Turkish)

in the following part in order to explicate how rationalities are produced and how they work as the tools of legitimization.

Discursive Background of the Reform: Articulation of the Transition to Knowledge Economy

The articulation of the distinctiveness, uniqueness and urgency of the curriculum change –which are all to be discussed in a detailed way in the following parts- actually constitute the political rationality of the reform by providing a discursive ground for justification of this particular course of action. In this way, a plausible rationale is provided for the legitimacy of the reform that is expected to create a rupture and a break from the pedagogical methods of the past, which are at this stage presented as outdated. Hence, before arguing these distinguishing aspects, it is necessary to touch upon several points regarding how the enunciation of the distinctiveness of the student-centered education model produces a legitimizing discourse and a particular rationality. In this respect, what Nicholas Rose indicates about the rationalities is crucial for the present discussion. He states that:

> Political rationalities are discursive fields characterized by a shared vocabulary within which disputes can be organized, by ethical principles that can communicate with one another, by mutually intelligible explanatory logics, by commonly accepted facts, by significant agreement on key political problems.[50]

Inferring from the statements of Rose, it can be suggested that the political rationalities are produced as discursive sites, within which intelligibility and validity of ideas or

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[50] Nikolas Rose. *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.), 28.

actions are assigned. In other words, they produce spaces of shared assumptions and judgements on existing conditions and political issues which are not deprived of logical and ethical aspects. Within the discursive formation of rationalities, a specific kind of truth and logic on the frames of what is plausible and incomprehensible, right and wrong, rational and irrational are produced, which is actually an act of categorization that is conducted by moral attachments to true and false. Therefore, this is actually more than a distinction and classification produced solely in the definitions; by way of discursive formations that signal out such distinctions between the good and the bad, rationalities generate normative and moral judgements and specific truths. These judgements and truths also point out which spaces need regulation in accordance with the identified and normalized values, and what is the necessary course of action for such regulation. In this way, they exert power opening spaces of intervention to regulate according to defined principles[51], the reasons of which are already legitimized and rationalized with the help of the truth produced upon the existing conditions. In this framework, the need of regulation of particular spaces is often presented as a solution to a problem or as the rational practice for the benevolence of the society. So, the political rationalities and discursive formations sustain a reasonable explanation that is intrinsic to moral judgements and ethical values which are utilized as the legitimizing reasons.

In the case of this present study of the curriculum change and the introduction of the student-centered education model, a particular sort of political rationality is also generated through the declaration of the necessity of the pedagogical rearrangement. One of the primary aspects of this rationality is the articulation of the transition from

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[51] Ibid.

industrial economic and social structures of classic liberalism to the neoliberal setting of globalizing information society and knowledge-based economy.

What characterizes this historical transition is the introduction of neoliberal political economy theory and implementations in the global and national scale. The current economic settlement is characterized by neoliberalism, which is a specific theory of political economy that has been the dominant form of capitalism in the world since the 1970s.[52] This particular form of capitalism differs from the classical liberalism mainly on the basis of the changing role of state in regulation of markets and capital investments. David Hill and Ravi Kumar define this distinction stating that while classical liberalism does not demand state regulation for private enterprise and does not let hindrance to profit by tax costs of welfare state, neoliberalism requires a strong state to promote its interests.[53] In this regard, state is "to guarantee the quality and integrity of money" by creating and regulating the institutional structures for the free flow of money and functioning of free market.[54]

> It (state) must set up those military, defence, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary.[55]

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[52] David Harvey. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.), 2.

[53] David Hill and Ravi Kumar. Introduction to *Global Neoliberalism and Education and Its Consequences*. ed. David Hill and Ravi Kumar. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3.

[54] David Harvey. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2.

[55] Ibid.

From this respect, neoliberalism has brought forth considerable changes in politics and policies. "Deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision have been all too common."[56] In most parts of the world -although in different times-, welfare state policies have been replaced by the regulations that embrace neoliberal theory of political economy that promote values of the competitive free market exchange in global scale.

Neoliberalism also goes along with a change in the organization and relation of markets and firms, realized by the instant developments in technology. After the 1970s economic crisis, firms and financial markets went through a sort of restructuring towards globalization by the increase in knowledge production and accumulation together with a revolution in the field of information and communication technologies (ICTs).[57] As David Harvey indicates, the rapid improvement and development in these fields have enhanced the capacities of firms "to accumulate, store, transfer, analyse, and use massive databases to guide decisions in the global marketplace."[58] In this way, a global network between markets has been established with the help of ICTs. This global network between firms and markets, based on knowledge production and transactions by way of ICTs, has become the backbone of the current economic regime of neoliberalism.

On the other hand, the patterns of production have shifted from industrial production to that of knowledge in the period of neoliberal political economy. It is

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[56] Ibid. 3.

[57] Manuel Castells. *The Rise of the Network Society*. (Malden, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 135.

[58] David Harvey. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. 3.

possible to indicate that the current economic structure rests upon the increasing importance of knowledge. As Guile indicates, we live in an epoch in which the essentials of economy are defined by "knowledge economy" thesis, which has brought forth knowledge as the primary means of production rather than labor, land or capital.[59] In such an economic context, knowledge itself becomes the economic value and source, which also inevitably creates a change in the principles of production and the division of labor. Referring to David Bell's conceptualizations, Guile declares that as a consequence of this new economic trend, there have occurred two basic shifts in the features of labor power. One of these shifts has tended towards a service sector that entails white collar employers and employees in banking, finance or management sectors along with the increase in the number of people working in personal or leisure services. The other shift is the appearance of new specialized occupations which are mostly related to technical issues such as computing or software engineering.[60]

This structural change in production and the appearance of new occupations along with knowledge economy in the setting of neoliberalism have brought forth new ways of correlation between education and economy. As Hill and Kumar suggests: "Business wants education fit for business- to make schooling and higher education subordinate to the personality, ideological, and economic requirements of capital, and to make sure schools produce compliant, ideologically indoctrinated, procapitalist, effective workers."[61] In this respect, along with the introduction of a specific sort of

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[59] David Guile,. *The Knowledge Economy and Education: The Learning Challenge of the Knowledge Economy.* (Rotterdam, Boston, Taipei: Sense Publishers, 2010), 2.

[60] Ibid.

[61] David Hill and Ravi Kumar. "Introduction: Neoliberal Capitalism and Education". 21.

economic organization, new roles and meanings are assigned to education in accordance

with the changing expectations from labor force, which is supposed to have specific

attainments and skills compatible with the new economic regime. These primary

attainments can be listed as learning to learn, problem solving, strategy production,

creativity, teamwork, spirit of entrepreneurship, technological culture, information

technology communication skills, adaptability, and flexibility.[62] Moreover, as Tarman

suggests related to the new perspectives of education, the current age requires

knowledge to be produced by rapid renewal; thereby, the properties expected to be

gained by the individuals of society are defined as reaching knowledge, using

knowledge and producing knowledge.[63] (A more detailed discussion on the specific

attainments supposed to be possessed by an ideal worker takes place in the following

chapter.)

The expectancies of the knowledge economy from education systems of nations

and the new correlations between economy and education can be best exemplified

through the reports of the World Bank, which can be regarded as the institution that has

the mission of regulating the nations' economies in accordance with the neoliberal

assumptions and arrangements by offering or imposing policy implementations in

various fields. One of those reports that cover suggestions of World Bank for

educational policies is "Reforming Education in the Regions of Russia". Although this

report seems to be related to the Russian case, it is actually a typical one. As the report

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[62] Jean-François Lyotard. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. (Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 51.

[63] Bülent Tarman. *The European Union and the Modernization of the Turkish Education System.* (Amherst, New York: Cambria Press, 2008.), 147.

indicates, "although education reform in Russia has its unique context, this report should be of much wider interest to the policy-makers and professional practitioners". [64] Moreover, the report is also important because the Russian education system is actually one of the most successful ones in the world in terms of the schooling, literacy, and achievement rates. So, the purpose of the World Bank's suggestions for Russia is not increasing the level of education in the country as it is the case in other parts of the world. Its purpose is just to provide the adaptation of the Russian education system (although it is successful on its own) to the developing market economy and its requirements. The report acknowledges this point:

> The education sector in Russia is one with a proud tradition. Most school-age children have access to school places, and nearly all adults in the population are literate. Under central planning, however, the education system operated without incentives for promoting accountability and efficiency. [...]The worsening fiscal base, as well as confusion about roles and responsibilities at each level of government, have contributed to growing inefficiencies and poor articulation between the outputs of the education system and the needs of the emerging market economy.[65]

The issue that is raised by the World Bank is about the modernization of the education system and methods in Russia, which would grant the efficiency of the output of education for the growing market economy. In this respect, the report states that: "There is a pervasive lack of access to new teaching materials, equipment, visual aids and information about new teaching methodologies. In order to improve quality and initiate pedagogical and curricular reform, teachers will require new training in classroom

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[64] World Bank, "Reforming Education in the Regions of Russia". no: 457, Dec. 1999. Accessed January 18, 2012
http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/0,,menuPK:476823~pagePK:64165236~piPK:64165141~theSitePK:469372,00.html

[65] Ibid, 11.

management and in updated pedagogical methods".[66] Beside updating the materials and methods of teaching, the report also mentions the need for a renewal of approach in education. According to it, the new approach should establish the principles of competence-based and individualized learning instead of education based on dictation and memorization. So, the report points out the student-centered education as the desirable approach. It is indicated that through the student-centered approach, it is possible to modernized education system with the purpose of promoting the skills of problem-solving, creativity, and innovative thinking.[67]

The suggestions offered for the Russian education system actually illustrate the general expectation of the neoliberal market economy from the education systems of nations in terms of policy and reform regulations. As this particular report of the World Bank that was prepared in 1999 on the Russian education system illustrates, these policy suggestions on education covers the fields of the shifts in the educational approaches along with the renewal of teaching methods, curriculum, and evaluation systems. The general purpose of these renewals, as it is also mentioned in the World Bank report, is to establish a competence-based and individualized education, which would grant the promotion of the skills such as innovative thinking, creativity, and problem solving.

Referring to these global shifts in the perception of and expectations from education, to make educational reform and curriculum rearrangements in the Turkish education system come to the agenda in order to compensate the consequences of the

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[66] Ibid, 3.

[67] Ibid.

historical rupture and to adapt to the post-industrial economy and society of information

age. In this respect, a vital role is attributed to reform in education system. It is

suggested that in order to realize the national socio-economic improvement and not to

fall behind in the level of contemporary developments:

> We, as the whole nation in general and the community of education in particular, have to successfully interpret the tendencies in the future decades and develop a unique model of individuality. It is an inevitable urgency to implement a course of action by constituting an education philosophy of this specific vision. This particular study of renewing the education programs is a reflection of this priority.[68]

This rationale of vitality of the reform constitutes the basis of the "truth regime" of the

contemporary politics of education, which can be exemplified in the curriculum

change.[69] Michel Foucault conceptualizes the notion of "truth regime" by stating that:

"Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth –that is, the types of

discourse it accepts and makes function as true.[70] In the present case, the idea of the

urgency of integrating the education system and pedagogical methods to the

contemporary age of knowledge economy and information society is promoted through

the judgement on the previous methods as outdated and invalid. In other words, the

reason of the primacy of educational reform as a necessity in such a historical moment

is rested upon the delegitimation of the previous pedagogical models and methods on

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[68] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. *İlköğretim 1-5. Sınıf Programları Tanıtım El Kitabı.* (Ankara: Devlet Kitapları Müdürlüğü Basımevi, 2005.), 9 accessed December 20, 2011 http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/prgmufredat.aspx (See the Appendix, p110 for its Turkish)

[69] David Shutkin. "The Deployment of Information Technology in the Field of Education and the Augmentation of the Child" *The Foucault's Challenge.* ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz and Marie Brennan. (New York and London: Teachers College University, 1998.), 218.

[70] Michel Foucault. "Truth and Power" quoted in David Shutkin. "The Deployment of Information Technology in the Field of Education and the Augmentation of the Child". *The Foucault's Challenge.* ed.Thomas S. Popkewitz and Marie Brennan. (New York and London: Teachers College University, 1998). 261.

the ground that they are antiquated along with the waning of the industrial society.

Furthermore, the introduction of the student-centered model is justified as the

requirement of the contemporary age that prioritizes knowledge production. In this

respect, the Introductory Booklet of the Primary School Programs for the fisrt- fifth

Grades *(İlköğretim Birinci-Beşinci Sınıf Programları Tanıtım El Kitabı)* emphasized the

need for changing the educational system which is teacher-centered based on

memorization, and which is therefore irrelevant for the requirements of the current

age.[71] It is pointed out that:

> In our age when knowledge is produced by rapid renewal, the future of the
> individual and the society depends upon the abilities of reaching, using, and
> producing knowledge. Attaining such abilities and sustaining them for a life them
> requires a modern education that is based upon knowledge production instead of
> memorization.[72]

In producing and promoting the rationality of the reform through the articulation of the

urgency of a rearrangement in the educational methods along with the "truth regime"

based on the delegitimation of previous education methods, the official texts,

documents, and reports play a crucial role as discursive tools. These texts are actually

the sites where the reasons, motives, perspectives, and expected consequences of the

reform are elaborated. In this regard, as Popkewitz states, these reports and texts are

"the instruments of persuasion and tools of rhetorical exchange" through which the

"social goals and aspirations are told about".[73] Moreover, they produce "new modes of

descriptions" that signal out the distinctions and categorizations between right and

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[71] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. *İlköğretim 1-5. Sınıf Programları Tanıtım El Kitabı.* 7.

[72] Ibid. 14. (See the Appendix, p111 for its Turkish)

[73] Thomas S. Popkewitz. *A Political Sociology of Educational Reform.* 158.

wrong, which in this way points out the "available choices" for the right course of action.[74] Hence, they share a similar vocabulary and ideational perspective which indeed present the "regime of truth" that underlies the official rationality inscribed in the orientation of the reform –that is, in the present case, to integrate to the global knowledge economy and to transform into an information society.

In this instance of curriculum change and the implementation of the student-centered education model, the role of the texts and official reports in mediating the reasons and targets of the new arrangements in the field of education is also highly crucial to be able to follow the formation of the official rationality. At this point, two basic reports need to be examined as the discursive tools that produce and promote the reasons and the underlying mentality of the educational reform: These are the reports of the State Planning Organization *(Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı)* and the declarations of the National Education Council *(Milli Eğitim Şurası)*.

Reference to Knowledge Economy in the Reports of State Planning

Organization and the Decisions of the National Educational Council

The issue of reform in the educational programs and curriculum started to be debated in the 1990s as the primary concern in the reports of the State Planning Organization and the declarations of the National Education Council. The significance of these official

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[74] Stephen J. Ball. "Performativities and Fabrications in the Education Economy". *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Sociology of Education*. Ed. Stephen J. Ball. (New York and London: Routledge Falmer, 2004.), 144.

documents mainly rests upon their impact in shaping the economic and political course of action in education as they entail suggestions related to the policy changes and regulations. They also exemplify what the underlying considerations are and how these concerns are deployed and elaborated to rationalize the reasons of the reform. In that respect, they accentuate the concerns of the time and they express the future oriented political stance in the face of the indicated key issues.

The importance attributed to education in the State Planning Organization reports has increased after the sixth plan that covers the years between 1990 and 1994. In this report, it is stated that the educational programs should be renewed in accordance with the technological developments. Related to the planning of education, it is noted that:

> Common education is going to gain more importance in this plan period due to the reasons such as the improvement of international economic relations, the increase of the communication facilities, the tendencies of entering to the age of "knowledge society", the rapid changes in the structures of professions, and the occurrence of the instant demands of labor market.[75]

Moreover, the transition to the knowledge society and knowledge economy is indicated as the factor that urges the implementation of the necessary arrangements in education. In the plan, the orientation of these expected regulations is indicated by the following statements: "In order to compensate the 'deficit of knowledge' of Turkey compared to the developed countries, the means and tools of reaching knowledge are going to be emphasized along with conducting research."[76]

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[75] Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı. *Altıncı Kalkınma Raporu (1990-1994).* accessed December 20, 2011 www.dpt.org.tr (See the Appendix, p111 for its Turkish)

[76] Ibid. (See the Appendix, p111 for its Turkish)

In the following plan that encapsulates the suggestions for the years between 1996 and 2000, the changes in the modes of production is emphasized as the motive that leads to the occurrence of new sorts of work sites that are based upon knowledge production and information technologies. Related to this point it is narrated that:

> In the world, there is a process of transition to the knowledge society along with the radical changes in the production systems and the related technological basis. Especially the advanced automation technology, which is a product of the developments in the information technologies, have provided the opportunity to substitute to a certain degree the brain power as well as simple labor power. In this framework, the knowledge intensive industries based upon qualified human power and advanced production methods have become the determinant of the rapid development. In order to fully benefit from science and technology which are the determinants of the new era, it is required to implement significant changes in the institutional structure and organizations in every level.[77]

In accordance with this notice, education is stated among the primary fields to be renewed to be able to provide economic improvement. Regarding the significance of education, it is stated that in the twenty first century, properly educated youth is going to be the most crucial economic force of Turkey, providing advantage in economic competition along with sustaining improvement and development in the integration process to the European Union. Here are some of the related statements from the plan,

> The well educated young population is going to be the biggest advantage of Turkey in the 2000s. For this reason, it is necessary to develop human power that can provide contribution to knowledge production and use knowledge in a creative way. In this way, it is going to be possible to increase welfare and productivity.[78]

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[77] Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı. *Yedinci Kalkınma Raporu (1996-2000).* accessed December 20, 2011 www.dpt.org.tr (See the Appendix, p111 for its Turkish)

[78] Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı. *Yedinci Kalkınma Raporu (1996-2000).* accessed December 20, 2011 www.dpt.org.tr (See the Appendix, p112 for its Turkish)

In this respect, the suggestions for educational improvement and regulations in the education institution are evaluated as the most significance concern of the seventh plan, which indicates the target as to raise a generation that has integrated into the knowledge era. For this purpose, it is suggested that the youth should be educated with an understanding of the global transformation, which can be realized by implementing new educational models, materials and techniques of learning and teaching.[79]

The most explicit expression of the need for revision in education together with the suggestions about the features and extent of the expected education reform take place in the eighth plan that proposes policy regulation for the period between 2000 and 2004. What essentially constitutes the content of the eighth plan as the main issue is the sustainment of human capital that can perpetuate the economic development in the knowledge economy. It is also stated that this plan is going to be the main document that is to support and direct the national effort in gaining the qualities of knowledge society. In this respect, the target of national education is indicated to be:

> To raise a people of knowledge society who are loyal to the principles and reforms of Atatürk; whose capabilities of perceiving and problem solving are flourished; who are democratic, libertarian and devoted to the national values; who are open to new ideas; who have the feeling of self-responsibility; who internalize the national culture; who can understand different cultures and contribute to the modern civilization; who are inclined to produce science and technology and have high levels of capacity being productive and creative.[80]

In order to actualize these aims, the national education is suggested to be regulated in accordance the principles of lifelong learning, through which people are thought the methods and techniques of reaching and producing knowledge. It is also pointed out

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[79] Ibid.

[80] Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı. *Sekizinci Kalkınma Raporu (2001-2003).* accessed December 20, 2011 www.dpt.org.tr (See the Appendix, p112 for its Turkish)

that the education system should entail an effective counselling service; be in line with the market standards of labor; encourage an educational approach based upon production; and utilize the technological developments and systems such as computer technology. Following these assumptions and propositions regarding the regulation of the education system, it is suggested in the plan that a new curriculum should be prepared that is more convenient for and appropriate to the qualities of the contemporary age.

Similar arguments and assumptions related to the expectations from national education are involved in the declarations of the National Education Councils. In the councils that were convened after the 1990s, the need for reform in the education system for the purpose of catching up with the era of information society is started to be expressed with an increasing emphasis. In the thirteenth council gathered in 1990, the importance of formal and non-formal training is stressed in order to embody more people in education, which is stated to be crucial to respond to the demands of the knowledge society. In this way, the significance of life-long learning comes to the agenda:

> Currently, humanity has reached the level that is called as the "knowledge society". At this stage, the need of society for human power who is well-educated, knowledgeable, researcher, productive, and creative has increased. [...] Moreover, the constant changes and developments in the structures of science, technology, and society make it inevitable for people to have life-long learning irrespective of the level of their formal training.[81]

In the fourteenth council (1993), the competition between states in becoming knowledge society and perpetuating technological development is mentioned as an

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[81] XIII. Milli Eğitim Şurası. accessed July 26, 2011. http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/suralar.aspx (See the Appendix, p112 for its Turkish)

incitement to sociological and cultural development. In order not to fall behind in this competition, it is asserted in the decisions that pre-school education should be disseminated and the compulsory education should be extended to eight years. Moreover, it is indicated that the education programs and the curricula should be renewed.[82]

The importance of knowledge production and reforming education models and techniques according to it gain more prominence in the fifteenth council. Here, the narration of globalization through knowledge economy and information technologies takes place in order to take attention to the vital role of education in providing human capital that is equipped with the capacity and capability to produce knowledge both as an economic advantage and as a way to cultural development. For this reason, the significance of lifelong learning is emphasized in order to create a society composed of individuals training themselves not only within the borders of school but also in every period and aspect of life. It is also expressed that, in such a framework, the target of education should be to teach the techniques of constructing and producing knowledge and to encourage lifelong training rather than promoting learning based on memorizing through didactic methods. Hence, it is asserted among the decisions that: "The character of the education programs which is based upon knowledge loading should be replaced by the attainments of the techniques of researching and reaching knowledge."[83]

The declarations and decisions of the State Planning Organization and the National Educational Councils indicate that from the 1990s on, there has been a

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[82] XIV. Milli Eğitim Şurası. accessed July 26, 2011. http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/suralar.aspx

[83] XV. Milli Eğitim Şurası. accessed July 26, 2011. http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/suralar.aspx (See the Appendix, p112 for its Turkish)

growing demand for reform in the national education system, which would basically

entail a revision of the curriculum, the education programs and the educational model.

As mentioned before, what essentially constitutes the force behind this demand is

evidently the increasing process of globalization and developments in the information

technology that lead to economic and cultural transformation.

Other Reference Points of the Student-Centered Education Model

The new curriculum and the student-centered education model are situated on four basic

reference points, which is one of the characteristic features of the reform. In these

reference points, the motive and target to integrate the contemporary changes and

development in the world is inscribed as the basis of the reform. Hence, they actually

constitute the historical and ideational background, and they express the main issues of

the new educational arrangement, revealing the scope of the targets that are influential

in determining the philosophical and epistemological perspective –which is going to be

discussed in detail after. The reference points are as follows:

> 1) As the first reference point, the new education programs take the principle of
> the sustaining and developing the Turkish Republic project implemented by
> Atatürk [...]. 2) The new education programs take the whole developments and
> changes in the world as the second reference point. [...] The point of departure of
> these developments is evaluated as the fact that the educational models which
> are suitable for industrial societies cannot handle with the competitive structure
> of the knowledge economy. 3) [...] the new education programs take the norms,
> targets, and educational approaches of the European Union as the third reference
> point. 4) As the forth reference point, the new education programs consider the
> evaluation of the existing condition of the national education, the analysis of the

success and failures, and their results. The findings of the international
researches such as   PISA, TIMMS ve PIRLS are examined in this framework.[84]

These points of reference are recurrent in various texts that explicate and introduce the

new educational regulation, such as the *Tebliğler* Journal and Introductory Booklet of

the Primary School Programs for the first-fifth Grades. Looking from a critical

perspective, the reference points can actually be evaluated as the expression of the

social and political regularities that underlie the rationality of the reform; in that, they

point out the forces that indicate the educational field as problematic and thus in need of

intervention and rearrangement. They also assert the primary assumptions and

grounding reasons of regulation, referring to the historical and social conditions. As

Scheurich suggests "in the case of social problems and policy solutions, the network of

regularities constitutes what is socially legitimized as a social problem and what is

socially legitimized as the proper range of policy solutions."[85] In this respect, the

regularities constitute the grids of the causal explanation which grants a rational

perspective to the assumed course of action and targeted end. This is one of the clues of

how power is exercised in the policy choices through selection and deployment of

specific reasons: by way of determining and articulating the reasons, specific truths on

possible choices as urgent and right are also generated. In these regards, the social

regularities denoted in the reference points of the student-centered education model

constitute the historical and social background of the truth regime of the educational

politics.

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[84] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, *Tebliğler Dergisi*. vol.64 no:2563 Agu. 2004. accessed July 26, 2011.
http://yayim.meb.gov.tr/dergiler/pdf/2563.pdf (See the Appendix, p112 for its Turkish)

[85] J.J. Scheurich. "Policy Archaeology: A New Policy Studies Methodology." *Sociology of Education:
Major Themes. Vol.I.* ed. Stephen J. Ball. (London and New York: Routledge Falmer, 2000.), 33.

One of these regularities that are foregrounded in these reference points is first of all the global developments that signal out the transition from the industrial social and economic structure to information society and knowledge economy, which is a recurrent theme that is already discussed above. In this frame, having an education system that still has outdated methods is defined as a problem to be handled through a reform, which is an inevitable course of action in order to sustain economic and cultural development compatible with the norms of the global world.

The European Union membership process and the EU criteria are also determining factors that shape the national policy arrangements in Turkey, which include the educational field. Here, the EU education norms, targets, and approaches are referred to be internalized and put into practice within the process of policy regulation. The notable principle of the EU educational policies, which is also offered to be intrinsic to the new student-centered education model, is lifelong learning. This principle can be regarded as the *sine qua non* quality of educational policies in the EU that are expected to supply the required work force for economic development and integrity in the contemporary age of information technologies and knowledge economy.[86] "The European Council in March 2003 underlined the importance of investment in human capital and lifelong learning as a condition for greater competitiveness, higher growth and better employment rates in a knowledge-based economy."[87] Investments in education for the promotion of lifelong learning and human

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[86] Bülent Tarman. The European Union and the Modernization of the Turkish Education System. Amherst, (New York: Cambria Press, 2008), 3.

[87] European Information Society. "A skilled European workforce for the knowledge-based economy". (2007) accessed January 30, 2012.
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/tl/ecowor/employ/index_en.htm

capital are therefore encouraged in the EU policies and policy recommendations in order to develop entrepreneurship mindset, which is regarded as a vital quality for success in the current economic regime. One of the reports of the European Commission for education and training points out that: "Encouraging the enterprise spirit is a key to creating jobs and improving competitiveness and economic growth throughout Europe. […] (Hence,) the importance of entrepreneurship is widely recognized today as a basic skill to be provided through life-long learning."[88] Beside encouraging entrepreneurship as a skill and attitude by means of life-long learning, the report also underlines other relevant skills to be promoted and strengthened in students beginning from their primary school years. These skills are problem solving, planning, decision making, communication, self-responsibility, networking, self-confidence, motivation for performance, critical and independent thinking, willingness for autonomous thinking, creativity, and proactivity.[89] Acknowledging the importance of these abilities and life-long learning, the report proposes for all the member countries as well as the candidate ones to rearrange their education systems from the inside. It suggests that: "Revising the national curriculum, offering assistance or incentives to the schools, providing appropriate training for teachers and promoting "learning by doing" can be some main instruments." [90]

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[88] European Commission. "Best Procedure project on Education and Training for Entrepreneurship". (Brussel: European Commission, 2002), 6. accessed January 30, 2012. http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/training_education/education_final.pdf.

[89] Ibid, 16.

[90] Ibid, 54.

These EU education norms and suggestions are deployed as a discursive tool in the new curriculum of the Turkish education system for the purpose of proving its consistency with the national project of EU membership. What is highlighted in the EU norms is briefly the promotion of the human capital through basic skills mentioned above. The idea of increasing human capital through developing these skills constitutes the basis of educational reform in Turkey, as well. To illustrate, in the Introductory Booklet of the Primary School Programs for the first-fifth Grades, the reasons that necessitate educational reform especially in the primary school level are listed, among which there are statements such as:

> The fact that the individuals' abilities of creativity, critical thinking, problem solution, making decisions, and cooperation have gained more importance as a result of economic and social developments; the fact that it has become more significant to raise citizens who can express themselves, can communicate, and have an entrepreneurial soul.[91]

These considerations of the educational arrangement are further supported by the disappointing results of the international research and projects. One of these projects is Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)[92], according to which the success of Turkish students in the tests of mathematics, reading, science and problem solving are disappointing, that is below the average in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. The deployment of these results of failure provides a scientific and hence an objective perspective to the reform. In this

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[91] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. *İlköğretim 1-5. Sınıf Programları Tanıtım El Kitabı.* 15 (See the Appendix, p113 for its Turkish)

[92] PISA is a project that assesses the success level of students who are at the end of their compulsory education process in the OECD countries. The target of the tests carried on in the fields of mathematics, science, reading and problem solving is to see how much students are equipped with the requirements of the information society.

"T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Basın Bildirisi OECD'nin PISA Projesine Türkiye'nin Katılımı". accessed January 27, 2012. http://www.meb.gov.tr/duyurular/duyurular/pisa/pisaraporu.htm

way, it further helps to rationalize the determined direction of the reform, legitimizing the reasons for it.

Distinguishing Aspects of the New Educational Model

As explicit in the aforementioned discussions on the reference points, the rationalization produced through an attribution to the regularities, and the regimes of truth, the essential idea of the curriculum rearrangement is to prepare the youth to the post-industrial and globalizing social and economic settlement by revising the educational model in accordance with the requirements of the contemporary era. Having such a target, the new educational model and curriculum are attributed unique characteristics, which provide a contemporary feature to the reform. In examining these distinct qualities of the educational regulation, the official texts and reports are discussed as the discursive sites of articulation. Moreover, to be able to have a better insight regarding the official mentality, several interviews are conducted with the people who participated in the committees of the Board of Education and Discipline *(Talim Terbiye Kurulu)*. In the following sections, these distinct qualities are evaluated under three general titles: the quality of the official research and work in preparing the new curriculum; the way the curriculum is written; the philosophical and epistemological approach.

Distinctive Nature of the Preparation Process

According to the interviews conducted with the experts of educational program
development who participated in the preparation works and research of the student-
centered education model, this reform has unique qualities with respect to the extent of
the research and work which were carried on to write a contemporary curriculum.
Within the scope of the official process, firstly, special committees were established to
constitute the course programs. For each course, different commissions composed of the
specialists of the course content were gathered; then, their research and findings were
discussed in the workshops for several times in the course of the process of writing the
course programs.[93] For instance, one of the interviewees from the Curriculum and
Instruction Committee *(Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu)* stated that:

> Special committees were established to prepare education programs for each
> course. In each committee, a specific number of academicians who are
> competent on both educational sciences and the course itself are appointed.
> Moreover, in order to hear and evaluate the ideas and criticisms of specialists
> from different backgrounds, workshops are arranged for each course.[94]

As reported in the interviews by several of the officials in the Curriculum and
Instruction Committee, these preparations are crucial and unique in the Turkish
education history in that a considerable amount of participation from diverse groups
were provided throughout the process. The target is said to reach to an agreement and
negotiation by hearing different opinions and approaches as much as possible, and to
propose an education model that would appeal to the needs and expectations of all. For

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[93] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. "Yeni İlköğretim Programları ve Yeni
yaklaşımlar". Ankara, 2005. accessed December, 20, 2012. http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/prgmufredat.aspx

[94] (See the Appendix, p113 for its Turkish)

this purpose, as the interviewee expresses, the ideas of teachers, experts, non-governmental organizations, students, and parents were taken into consideration in the commissions and the committees.

> For example, we once invited almost forty nongovernmental organizations. In other words, during this study, we have the aim of providing the participation and contribution of each segment of Turkish society, and to reflect the heritage of society [...]. Firstly, I prepared an inventory of the primary school programs in the world scale. How much participation [...], data collection, meetings, workshops, [...] conferences, symposiums, etc. And, almost 42,000 contribution and ideas were gathered, which means the peak of the participation not only in Turkey but also in the world.[95]

In the pamphlet published by the Ministry of Education titled as "New Primary School Programs and New Approaches" (*Yeni İlköğretim Programları ve Yeni Yaklaşımlar*), there is a detailed account of the contribution provided from the related agents. According to it, 38 non-governmental organizations, academicians from 8 universities, 26,304 students, 9,192 parents, 2,259 teachers, and 697 inspectors attended to the preparation works by delivering their opinions.[96] Moreover, as Tarman indicates, some European experts were also invited for assistance to the commissions.[97] It is claimed that all the suggestions and reactions from the different parts of the world and of Turkey were taken into consideration with the help of which the most extensive consensus on the education reform and the related regulations was claimed to be obtained in the Turkish education history.

Another issue that comes to the foreground in the interviews related to the process of the reform is the scope of the materials and issues which were evaluated in

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[95] (See the Appendix, p113 for its Turkish)

[96] Ibid.

[97] Bülent Tarman. *The European Union and the Modernization of the Turkish Education System.* 128.

order to constitute a comprehensive and contemporary content for the curriculum that would as well be compatible with the national values, historical heritage, and cultural qualities. The same point is also emphasized in the text "New Primary School Programs and New Approaches" (*Yeni İlköğretim Programları ve Yeni Yaklaşımlar*). According to it, for the first time since the 1940s, such an extensive project has been launched, which has been prepared through international and national comparisons, and which has a target of a holistic change. In this framework, it is mentioned that all the national education models and programs from 1924 to the present were scrutinized concomitantly with the educational approaches approved and practiced in the foreign countries. In this way, the shortages and the advantages of the previous education models and methods were suggested to be considered while evaluating the worldwide progress in the educational sciences. The student-centered education model is stated to have been established on a substantial basis which was sensitive to the national historical and cultural heritage; attentive to the deficiencies of the previous educational arrangements; follower of the recent trends in the field of educational sciences; and also responsive to the modern requirements of the global world (interview data).

The Content and the Form of the Curriculum

One of the most underlined qualities of the new curriculum is the different and flexible composition of the course programs compared with the preceding ones. According to the Introductory Booklet of the Primary School Programs for the first-fifth Grades, the course programs are prepared as flexible in order to allow making adaptations in

accordance with the specific requirements of the class environment and the particular characteristics of students. In this respect, as reported in the interviews, how lessons are taught is not standardized with pre-determined instructions. Included in the course programs, there are several examples as a guideline for teachers related to how to illustrate the concepts of the units and how to explicate the content. However, the materials to be utilized or the practices to be conducted are to be decided by teachers according to the class environment. In this way, the curriculum is stated to gain a dynamic quality and flexibility. This is actually one of the indispensible features of the student-centered education, with the help of which teachers have the chance to respond to the necessities and capacities of students instead of being compelled to instruct through pre-determined and standardized methods.

Another distinct quality of the student-centered education model and the new curriculum is the "spiral principle" which is adopted to provide the relationship and coherence of the course subjects in different class levels of the eight-year compulsory education. Nirah Hativah defines "spiral principle" as:

> This teaching strategy refers to starting out by presenting the easier-to-comprehend aspects of the material or a simplified version of the material, and teaching the more complex aspects only after the first stage is sufficiently understood. Once students grasp the general idea, their minds are free to cope with all the complexities presented in additional cycles. The cycles are arranged in increasing level of complexity, abstractedness and difficulty, and may not be mutually exclusive.[98]

The spiral teaching method is suggested to enable students to correlate their prior knowledge with the new ones, strengthening their deep understanding. "The more

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[98] Nira Hativah. *Teaching for Effective Learning in Higher Education.*(USA and Netherlands: Kluwer, 2000.), 159.

cycles of elaboration that take place, the greater the number of links is formed, and the deeper is the understanding of the material."[99] The course contents in different class levels, in this respect, are organized in a way that moves from simpler to the more complex and more detailed. [100] This can be illustrated with one example from the Science and Technology Course program (*Fen ve Teknoloji Dersi)*. In this course, several basic concepts are determined as the fields of instruction for all class levels from the fourth to the eighth grade. One of them is the "force and movement", under the title of which there are subtopics. These subtopics gradually evolve from the general to the particular while the class level increases. In this way, the basis and details of the main topic are configured through cycles that accumulate upon each other.[101]

Beside the flexibility and the spiral principle, one of the most emphasized novelties in the curriculum is the indication of eight basic abilities as the principle targets of all the course programs in the primary school. This is one of the points that are mostly highlighted in the interviews as the novelty of the educational model. Regarding this, the interviewee utters that:

> We put eight basic abilities in the new programs. These are critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, questioning and researching, problem solution, using technology effectively, entrepreneurship, and using Turkish language correctly. These have become the foundation and the centre of every

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[99] Ibid.

[100] As it is to be clarified in the following part of the thesis, such an approach to teaching through cycles is actually parallel with the constructivist perspective in that both rest on the idea that deep learning occurs through correlation of the new and old knowledge by way of construction of the recent ones upon the existing data and perceptions by learner.

[101] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. "Fen ve Teknoloji Sunumu" accessed December, 20, 2012. http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/prgmufredat.aspx

course. The whole aim of mathematics or science is to develop these abilities. And the disciplines are constructed in a way to develop these abilities.[102]

These shared abilities are expected to be gained by students throughout their learning process. Therefore, the Introductory Booklet of the Primary School Programs indicates that the practices and the "attainments" of each course have been regulated in consideration of these abilities. In other words, they are suggested to constitute the foundation of the "attainments" defined for each course units. At this point, the expression of "attainment" has a significant implication. In the Introductory Booklet, what is meant by "attainment" is defined as: "knowledge, abilities, manners, and values that are expected to be gained by students with the help of the experiences which are arranged and planned within the learning processes."[103] In this regard, within the course programs, the targets of each unit –in terms of the expected abilities and perceptions to be gained by students- are written under the title of "attainments", according to which there take place related practices. For example, as it is illustrated in the related part of Introductory Booklet, in the Social Sciences course *(Hayat Bilgisi Dersi)*, there is an attainment such as "by using the method of oral history and utilizing materials and objects, s/he composes a family history."[104] It is suggested that in this statement there is the collaboration of "ability", "knowledge" and "value", which constitute the attainment as a whole: using materials and specific methods as the ability; reaching a consequence questioning the data as the knowledge; the notion family itself as the value.[105] Here, the

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[102] (See the Appendix, p114 for its Turkish)

[103] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. *İlköğretim 1-5. Sınıf Programları Tanıtım El Kitabı.* 18. (See the Appendix, p114 for its Turkish)

[104] Ibid. 43

[105] Ibid.

emphasis on the active role of student should be noted: these attainments are to be gained by students themselves through active practicing, questioning, participation, and understanding. In other words, they are to be attained and constructed by students rather than transmitted to them as intended behavior forms.

In this respect, in order to stress the active and individual role of students in developing the targeted "ability, perception, and manners", the expression of "attainment" is adopted. The adoption of the notion of "attainment" is proposed as a novelty of the student-centered education model, which is in line with the precepts of the new educational perspective. In this sense, the expression of "attainment" is attributed specific implications different from the preceding notions. In the previous curriculums, the statement of "behavior" was used instead of "attainment". To illustrate, in the educational model introduced in 1983, the aim of the course units were stated to be written in terms of intended behavior forms.[106] This change in the statements and the replacement of "behavior" with "attainment" actually indicates a fundamental novelty in the general perception to education, and it rests upon a philosophical and theoretical shift in the approach to learning. In the curriculum, this is explained as a transition from "behaviorist educational principles" to the "constructivist educational approach". The implications of this change of perception in the educational philosophy and theory are going to be discussed in the following part as the third distinguishing aspect of the new educational model.

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[106] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, *Tebliğler Dergisi*. Vol.64 no:2563 Agu. 2004.

<u>Promotion of the Constructivist Principles</u>

As it is indicated in the Student-Centered Education Application Model *(Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim Uygulama Modeli)* prepared by EARGED, the first step of constituting an educational model and course programs is to decide on the general principles of epistemological and philosophical approach to education.[107] The philosophical perspective and educational approach determine how to regulate the process of teaching and learning and how to operate it. It points out the roles of students and teachers, the methods and practices of teaching along with the strategies of class management.[108] In other words, the philosophical approach constitutes the foundation of a pedagogical model in accordance with the basic expectations from education.

In the student-centered education model implemented in Turkey, the educational approach and philosophical perspective is rested upon "constructivist" principles, which have brought forth a revision and rearrangement of the targets, content, evaluation, and methods of education. In this respect, constructivism constitutes the philosophical and epistemological infrastructure of the educational model suggesting a particular stance with respect to the questions of learning and knowledge building.

What constructivism proposes as the principle is the idea that people construct knowledge individually by correlating their already existing ideas and perceptions with recently gained experiences. Although it is a novel issue of discussion in the field of

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[107] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Eğitim Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı. *Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim Uygulama Modeli.* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 2007.), 36. accessed December 20, 2011 http://earged.meb.gov.tr/arasayfa.php?g=33

[108] Ibid.

education, constructivism actually has a deep-rooted history in philosophy that deals with epistemology questioning how knowledge is perceived and how learning occurs by posing claims regarding the objectivity of knowledge.[109] Additionally, as an educational approach, constructivism is also interwoven with the suggestions of cognitive science, psychology and learning theories. In that respect, the contributions of the ideas of Kant, Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky are remarkable in the development of constructivist educational principles.

Under the influence of such various theories and theoreticians of epistemological philosophy, psychology, and learning, constructivism is conceptualized and interpreted in diverse ways as an educational theory and pedagogical approach. These different perceptions have led a kind classification among the constructivists, who are called radical, social or cognitive constructivist according to their inspiring theory or theoretician. However, on the basis of all these inclinations, there are some general assumptions regarding what is knowledge, how it is constructed, how it is acquired –or is it a matter of acquiring- and how the process of learning functions, which are influential subject matters in developing an educational program and determining the roles of subjects included in the process of education.

The fundamental point of emphasis of the constructivist educational approach is the subjective aspect of knowledge. It poses a challenge to the positivist creed, dismantling the belief in the objective and single truth of an ontological reality and its possibility of transition to the learner as an unbiased knowledge. It opposes to the

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[109] Orhan Çınar, et.al. "İlköğretim Okulu öğretmen ve yöneticilerinin yapılandırmacı eğitim yaklaşımı ve program hakkındaki görüşleri". *İnönü Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi.* vol.7 no: 11 Spring 2006: 47-64

claims that disregard the learner's subjective role in perceiving and interpreting the facts. Moreover, the socio-cultural environment which has impact on one's ways of conceiving facts is also pointed out as a factor that creates diversion among individual processes of knowledge construction, which again disrupts the idea that there is one single and valid truth irrespective of socio-cultural differences.[110] The definition given in the preface of *Constructivism: Theory, Perspectives and Practice* provides a precise explanation of the primary concern of constructivist perspective: "the (constructivist) theory describes knowledge not as truths to be transmitted or discovered, but as emergent, developmental, non-objective, viable constructed explanations by humans engaged in meaning-making in cultural and social communities of discourse."[111]

In the constructivist perspective of education, which stands against the emprico-realist tradition, viability of knowledge is highlighted rather than its truth. In this respect, it stresses the pragmatic aspect of knowledge. As Larochelle and Bednarz indicate, knowledge is "negotiated, propelled by a project, and perpetuated for as long as it enables its creators to organize their reality in a viable fashion."[112] Reality here refers to the experiential world of individuals, to which they try to adapt by creating and manipulating suitable and viable conceptual structures which provide a more regular

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[110] The extent of the consideration of the socio-cultural effect in knowledge construction differs among the theoreticians of constructivist educational paradigm. While some of them who are basically the followers of Piaget dwell mostly upon the functioning of mind and the cognitive processes of individuals, some are more influenced by Vygotsky's conceptualizations on the role of socio-cultural environment. This is one of the issues that lead to occurrence of diverse inclinations among the constructivists.

[111] Catherine Twomey Fosnot. Preface to *Constructivism: Theory, Perspectives, and Practice.* ed. Catherine Twomey Fosnot. (New York and London: Teachers College, Columbia University Press, 2005.), ix

[112] Marie Larochelle and Nadine Bednarz. "Constructivism and Education: Beyond Epistemological Correctness". *Constructivism and Education*. ed. Marie Larochelle, et.al. (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge, 1998), 8.

and predictable understanding of the world.[113] In that, knowledge is not an exact representation and truth of reality; rather it is constructed by individual perceptions to create an understandable world that is compromised and negotiated with past and novel experiences. Therefore, knowledge is subjective, being related to experiences; and it is permanent only as long as it is viable.

Acknowledging and praising the viability of knowledge, constructivist educational perspective suggests that "learning […] is a self-regulatory process of struggling with the conflict between existing personal models of the world and discrepant new insights."[114] In this conceptualization of learning, "deep understanding occurs when the presence of new information prompts the emergence or enhancement of cognitive structures that enable us to rethink our prior ideas.[115] This interaction provides the development of higher cognitive abilities on the part of the students who, by correlating and synthesizing their experiences and building new perceptions upon the existing ones, construct their own knowledge and create new conceptual structures that help them grasp and adapt to their environment.

In this respect, such a consideration of learning embraces an individualistic view that regards each student as unique having distinct characteristics in perceiving and understanding the world. So, it takes students as the centre of concern, regarding them not as empty minds to be filled with transmitted and memorized knowledge, but as

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[113] Ernst V. Glasersfeld. "Why Constructivism Must Be Radical". *Constructivism and Education.* ed. Marie Larochelle, et.al. (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge, 1998.), 25.

[114] Catherine Twomey Fosnot. Preface to *Constructivism:Theory, Perspectives, and Practice.* ix.

[115] Jacqueline G Brooks. *In Search of Understanding: the case for constructivist Classrooms.* (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1999), 15.

agents that already have discrepant ideas and abilities to conceive and construct data in distinct ways. In this framework, learning is not considered as a mimetic activity that involves repetition and memorizing.[116] In the constructivist view of learning, the process of achieving success is as much important as the final target. The principle idea, in this sense, is to encourage students to seek information, to raise questions about it, to interpret the facts, to produce meaning out of data, to construct their own models and strategies and defend their own ideas.[117] In other words, it targets to empower the individual characteristics of the students by guiding them to realize their own ways, to discover their inner capacities and to develop their abilities.

This perspective gives autonomy to the learner, shifting his/her position in the schooling process from the unknowing and passive subject as the receiver of knowledge to that of the active agents of learning. Learning is in the control of student who needs to seek, produce and process knowledge by questioning, searching and interpreting.[118]This control and autonomy brings forth the responsibility on the part of learners. Since learning is not a mechanic transition of knowledge, students are expected to take responsibility to be autonomous thinkers, to have active participation and to produce knowledge. As Fosnot and Perry suggest: "the learners (rather than the teacher) are responsible for defending, proving, justifying, and communicating their ideas to the classroom community."[119] In such a context of schooling, the didactic

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[116] Ibid.

[117] Catherine Twomey Fosnot. Preface to *Constructivism:Theory, Perspectives, and Practice*.ix.

[118] Ömer Genç. *Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin Yapılandırmacı Öğretmen Özellliklerini Gösterme Düzeylerine İlişkin Algılarının Bazı Değişkenlere Göre İncelenmesi*. M.A. Thesis. (Ege University, 2007), 22.

[119] Catherine Twomey Fosnot. Preface to *Constructivism:Theory, Perspectives, and Practice*. 34.

authority of teachers is to be replaced with the role of guidance and facilitator. Teachers are expected to empower the autonomy of students by encouraging them to feel responsible and to be initiatives as problem solvers and even as problem finders. This requires an interactive classroom environment where teachers are to prompt students' interests by helping them searching, questioning, and cooperating instead of constraining them to follow what is transferred as knowledge.[120] Teachers should be aware of the individual differences among students and should support each student to foster his/her particular tendencies and abilities. In this respect, a teacher is not the figure of authority in a classroom; s/he is the observer who has the duty to realize and develop the individual autonomy and the feeling of responsibility among students. In this context, control is provided not through reinforcements and punishments, but with the help of self-discipline of students.[121]

Assigning the role of guidance to teacher and attributing the responsibility of learning and discipline to students, constructivist educational approach is suggested to bring forth innovation in the organization and functioning of schooling process in accordance with its particular conceptualization of learning and knowledge building. In this regard, constructivism is generally compared with behaviorism, which is labelled as a traditional educational approach embraced in the older educational models.

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[120] Jacqueline G Brooks. *In Search of Understanding: the case for constructivist Classrooms*. 103.

[121] Ömer Genç. *Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin Yapılandırmacı Öğretmen Özellliklerini Gösterme Düzeylerine İlişkin Algılarının Bazı Değişkenlere Göre İncelenmesi*. 21.

Comparing Constructivism and Behaviorism

In the official sources that introduce constructivism as the philosophical and epistemological approach of the student-centered education model, the principles of constructivism are suggested to be in contrast with behaviorism, which is the theoretical foundation of the previous educational model of 1983.[122] In this regard, in the Introductory Booklet, the "constructivist approach" is declared to displace the strict "behaviorist" perceptions and methods of education.

According to Fosnot and Perry's conceptualization, behaviorism "is the doctrine that regards psychology as a scientific study of behavior and explains learning as a system of behavioral responses to psychological stimuli.[123] In behaviorism, what is essential is to provide learning through reinforcements, practice and external motivation. Hence, human behavior is described "essentially by the stimulus-response relationship coupled with positive reinforcement of desired behavior and negative reinforcement of unwanted behaviors.[124] So, the targets of learning are defined in the form of behaviors and skills to be gained by learners. In this respect, behaviorist theory mainly focuses on the behavioral changes.[125]

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[122] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Eğitim Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı. "Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim Uygulama Modeli". 38.
   Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. *İlköğretim 1-5. Sınıf Programları Tanıtım El Kitabı.* 14.

[123] Catherine Twomey Fosnot. Preface to *Constructivism:Theory, Perspectives, and Practice.* 8.

[124] Jacqueline G Brooks. *In Search of Understanding: the case for constructivist Classrooms.* 103.

[125] Catherine Twomey Fosnot. Preface to *Constructivism:Theory, Perspectives, and Practice.* 9.

This perspective has particular assumptions related to curriculum planning, organization of learning processes and the roles of agents in schools. Fosnot and Perry elaborates on these assumptions by indicating first of all that in the behaviorist perspective, learners are considered more as passive agents to be motivated for learning through reinforcements and directions of teachers.[126] Hence, teachers have more autonomy in shaping the education process, being attributed the role of transmitting knowledge with the purpose of constituting the desired behavior forms and skills in students. In this framework, learning is assumed to be a linear process in which skills are to be attained sequentially in the form of subskills. As a measure of evaluation of success, students are tested in order to detect where they have deficiencies in this linear continuum of learning and gaining skills. Fosnot and Perry further indicate that in such a context of education, curriculum is planned being divided into hierarchal parts that constitute the whole of a content, which is generally considered as a finite body of predetermined and objective knowledge that can be transmitted to learners through instruction of teachers.[127]

The principles of behaviorism are generally considered together with teacher-centered or program-based educational models. In these educational models, the role of teacher is at the centre since s/he is the agent responsible for transferring knowledge in accordance with the predetermined targets of the course programs. The Student-Centered Education Application Model indicates that in the program-based educational models, the course contents are standardized in terms of defined and specified

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

behavioral targets. In this respect, teachers have the duty of following the standard course programs. This quality of program-based model that is shaped by the behaviorist principles are compared and contrasted with the constructivist perception and flexible feature of student-centered model. The Student-Centered Education Application Model entails a detailed schema where the principles of behaviorism and constructivism are compared in terms of their assumptions for the educational models. According to this comparison, contrary to the program-based models, in the student-centered education settings, the individual characteristics and needs of students are stated to be taken as the primary concern that shapes the course practices, materials and methods of teaching. Moreover, the educational targets of courses in the behaviorist approaches are classified in the form of behavioral attainments in a hierarchical line while in the constructivist educational settings, there is not such a classification of targets; the main concern of constructivism is actually to follow and flourish the higher-cognitive abilities of learners rather than observing and examining behavioral changes of students. In this schema of comparison, it is further indicated that in behaviorism, the sign of success and knowledge attainment is reflected through development in behavior forms; however, the constructivist approach suppose that knowledge and the notion of reality is constituted and constructed by individual perceptions and experiences, which leads to improvement in higher cognitive skills. Also, what is essential for the education process in behaviorism is the end product, whereas the process of education itself is taken as the basic issue in constructivism.[128]

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[128] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Eğitim Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı. *Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim Uygulama Modeli*. 38.

All these comparisons between the assumptions of constructivism and behaviorism are actually established upon the idea of the opposition between the "traditional" and the "modern" perspectives. Here, behaviorist principles are marked as the traditional and old as an educational approach while constructivism is promoted as the contemporary and modern. This aspect of opposition between the two educational approaches is mentioned as a shift from mechanic models to more dynamic ones in schools. In the Student-Centered Education Application Model, it is declared that

> By appreciation of the educational theory and the system that can adapt to complicated conditions, new ideas have developed about learning and school education. A biological, organic, and fluid metaphor that is placed within a dynamic contrast has replaced the mechanical comparisons.[129]

In this dynamic educational model, methods of education founded upon teacher-centered methods, didactic transition of knowledge and learning based on memorization are assumed to be replaced by a setting where students can learn by cooperating, experiencing, creating and exploring, which all presuppose the active participation of learners (which are already mentioned as assumptions of constructivism). It is also indicated that in order to create such an educational environment, "It is necessary to create a culture of learning which can allow risk, innovation, experience, and struggle, and which individualize learning by redirecting it."[130] These tropes of taking risk, competition, novelty, individual and active learning are regarded as the indispensible building blocks of the contemporary education. In this regard, the student-centered education model and the constructivist educational approach are suggested to be the most appropriate pedagogical perspectives for the requirements of a modern educational

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[129] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Eğitim Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı. *Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim Uygulama Modeli.* 4. (See the Appendix, p114 for its Turkish)

[130] Ibid. (See the Appendix, p114 for its Turkish)

culture, which is believed to invalidate the preceding educational methods and theories in accordance with the global and epochal changes in all societal forms. Therefore, it is essential to discuss what characterizes the precepts of the modern education and why constructivism is highlighted as the ideal educational approach in this context.

Constructivism and the Individualistic Approach

The most significant and distinctive quality of the way constructivism is interpreted as the educational philosophy is that this interpretation puts the individuality of learners to the centre and renders them as the active and responsible agents in attaining and producing knowledge. It is possible to recognize this quality in the general precepts of constructivist educational approach, which can be briefly summarized as: first, knowledge is actively constructed by learning subjects; second, the function of learning and cognizing is adaptive; third, cognition serves the subjects to organize and understand the external world by creating subjective spaces of meaning.[131] As it can be inferred from these assumptions of constructivist approach, this interpretation of the function of education and learning mainly focuses on individuals' qualities and the way they adapt to, understand and regulate their subjective spaces of meaning and perception. In other words, this interpretation mainly cultivates the idea of individualism in education, aiming at fostering individual skills, qualities and capacities to enable individuals to adapt to the changing conditions through their own

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[131] Terry Wood. "From Alternative Epistemologies to Practice in Education: Rethinking What It Means to Teach and Learn". *Constructivism in Education.* ed. Leslie P. Steffe and Jerry Gale. (Hillsdal and New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc. Press, 1995), 332.

characteristics and to empower their selves in order to regulate and organize their own spaces of meaning.

All of these ideas and presumptions of constructivism are indeed what render this approach as the popular and ideal educational perspective for the current economic and societal structures resting upon knowledge production and exchange. In order to define this current condition, Shlomo Waks uses the phrase of "knowledge explosion". According to Waks, we live in an era when there is a huge accumulation and production of knowledge that creates constant turnovers in science, technology and related philosophical and theoretical approaches. Regarding the impact of such knowledge explosion on education, she further indicates that there is a need in educational practices from transmission to enculturation in order to provide learners with skills and capacities to grasp and adapt to this turnovers.[132] In other words, through education, individuals should have the chance to attain necessary qualities such as innovative thinking skills, self-responsibility of learning, self-realization, flexibility, and creativity that help them handle with such an accumulation of knowledge by way of establishing individual and authentic ways of using knowledge in a productive and genuine manner.

In this respect, the assumptions of constructivism appeal to the expectations from a contemporary education, which basically goals to empower individuality of learners in attaining and producing knowledge. In an environment of "knowledge explosion" in Waks' words, as there is no possibility of either establishing stability and rigid lines of knowledge to be dictated or limiting learning to the school space, learners

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[132] Shlomo Waks. "Lateral Thinking and Technology Education". *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Dec., 1997), 247.

are encouraged to invent their own ways of seeking, finding and utilizing knowledge, just as constructivist principles presuppose. This is also one of the most essential aspects of the student-centered education model, where constructivism is adopted as the underlying philosophy. In the Student-Centered Education Application Model, the increase in knowledge accumulation is pointed out as an incitement for a change in the educational approaches along with the growing importance of individual qualities in attaining knowledge. It is stated that:

> Because the amount of knowledge has increased to a great extend, the structures (schools) and the determined strategies, which are used to transmit knowledge in a direct and didactic way, are shaken by the knowledge based institutions which are aware of the necessity of constant learning at work.[133]

In the same document, as a reason of this foundational theoretical and practical change in the educational models, the diversification of the contexts and spaces of learning emerged concurrent with the advanced technological developments and great amount of knowledge production are indicated. It is suggested that this diversification and change in learning contexts have caused an increase in the significance of individual differences and qualities of learners in attaining knowledge:

> The rapid changes in technology cause a fast change and diversification in the learning environments. From now on, the learning environment is not only limited to school buildings and classrooms. The multimedia founded upon computer technology, and the knowledge networks based upon the developments in the communication technologies constitute an electronic learning environment. The increase in the individual learning environments also increases day by day the importance of the individual differences of students.[134]

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[133] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Eğitim Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı. *Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim Uygulama Modeli.* 8. (See the Appendix, p114 for its Turkish)

[134] Ibid. (See the Appendix, p114 for its Turkish)

Such an emphasis on the individuality of learning subjects and the importance of empowerment of the individual qualities and differences in building up knowledge is a recurrent theme in the texts and documents that introduce the student-centered education model and constructivist principles. Therefore, the issue of empowerment of individuality through constructivist educational approach and student-centered education methods can be suggested to be the most prominent objective of the new pedagogical arrangement at the primary school level.

This quality of the new educational model and approach implemented recently in the Turkish education system actually implies a particular configuration of "self" as the learning and educated subject. This configuration resting upon the idea of empowerment of individual capacities and qualities brings forth the idealization of certain skills and characteristics, realization of which is considered as the ultimate actualization of the individuality of learning subjects. In other words, the individuality of learning subjects is actually a defined category, which is expected to be equipped with specific attainments and features. Therefore, there is particular definition of "self" that grounds the idea of individualism promoted in the recent educational methods, which is to be elaborated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF "SELF" IN THE NEW EDUCATIONAL MODEL

In the preceding chapter, the impact of immense knowledge accumulation and production in the context of knowledge economy and information technologies is mentioned as an incitement for educational reform, along with a discussion on the discursive formation of the reform as a tool of rationalization. In this chapter, the assumptions of the new pedagogical rule regarding the skills and qualities of the learning subjects are discussed as a specific configuration of self and social regulation.

The way how self is constructed along with the specific conceptualization of learning and knowledge in the student-centered education model is elicited in the determined skills and attainments in the curriculum and in the defined qualities of the successful learner. These definitions of expected attainments in the curriculum indicate the idealization of specific configuration of "self" as the learning subject. Indeed, in these identifications and expectancies in the form of skills and attainments, the ultimate target of the curriculum reform is accentuated, which aims to create a youth embodying required qualifications. Therefore, it is essential to discuss these pointed out skills in the curriculum and course programs in order to grasp wholly the regulatory mentality underlying the education reform.

Promoted Characteristics of Self in the Student-Centered Education Model

In the Introductory Booklet of the Primary School Programs for the first-fifth Grades,

the Student-Centered Education Application Model, and the particular course programs,

the principles of the curriculum are mentioned and elaborated with references to the

assumed and expected qualities and skills of learning subjects. In other words, in these

texts, the foundational precepts of the new educational model are based upon specific

characteristics of self, which are supposed either as an intrinsic quality of subjects or as

an end to be achieved. In the Introductory Booklet, the expectations from students are

listed as it follows:

> Students should take the responsibility of their own learning, and they should
> realize their increasing responsibility in each grade. They are desired to be
> individuals, who develop their scientific and technologic notions vocabulary;
> who are asking and questioning; who develop, solve, and discuss their own
> problems; and who can make use the learning opportunities outside the
> classroom. Moreover, student should behave consciously about the security
> issues in his/her environment and should develop group work abilities.[135]

In this definition of expectations from students, awareness and realization of self-

responsibility, technological literacy, problem solving, group work and self-

improvement are the themes that are highlighted. Similar remarks are as well included

in the Student-Centered Education Application Model. In this text, these points are

listed as already possessed qualities of learning subjects. So, it explicates how the self

of students should be regarded in this particular pedagogical approach of constructivism

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[135] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. *İlköğretim 1-5. Sınıf Programları Tanıtım El Kitabı.* 25. (See the Appendix, p115 for its Turkish)

and student-centered education. It is stated that in the student-centered education, a learning subject:

> She knows herself and she is aware of her individual characteristics; she is willing for self-improvement; she actualizes herself; she is willing for cooperation and group work; she learns learning; she develops her thinking abilities; she transfers her academic abilities to life abilities; she has the capacity of effective communication; she uses technology effectively; she uses her time and energy in an effective way.[136]

All these assumptions are also recurrent in the particular course programs, each of which emphasizes at least one of these targets as a part of attainments to be gained by students. Among these attainments, learning to learn, communication and cooperation skills are the common ones emphasized as important qualities in each course program. The qualities of self-realization and self-awareness, for instance, are stressed mostly in the Life Science (*Hayat Bilgisi)* course. As an attainment, it is pointed out that:

> She (student) knows her physical characteristics; she decides what she can do easily and what she enjoys doing; she knows and expresses herself realizing her emotions; she decides on her differences than and similarities with her friends.[137]

In this way, realizing their own innate qualities through self- management, students can decide on the aim of their lives; they have the ability to make predictions regarding the risks and obstacles on the way of their targets; or, they can make career plans.[138] On the other hand, technological literacy is the primary issue of the Science and Technology *(Fen ve Teknoloji)* course. Here, the learning subject is defined as:

> The individuals who are literate of science and technology are more active agents in reaching and using knowledge; in solving problems; in making

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[136] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Eğitim Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı. *Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim Uygulama Modeli.* 10. (See the Appendix, p115 for its Turkish)

[137] Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. "Hayat Bilgisi Sunumu" accessed December, 20, 2012 http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/prgmufredat.aspx (See the Appendix, p115 for its Turkish)

[138] Ibid.

decisions about the problems of science and technology considering the risks, benefits, and the existing choices; and in producing new knowledge.[139]

In this way, students are assumed to be aware of the importance of technology and science, as a vital means of problem solving and knowledge production. Moreover, they are encouraged to utilize information technologies effectively in preparing projects or making researches. In each course program, learning to use information technologies is underlined as an important attainment for a primary school student. Students are to make sense of information technologies as a means of gaining, producing and understanding knowledge; they have to learn how to use these technological vehicles, how to use them in order to reach the necessary knowledge and to present data; and they have to be able to analyze the data they gather via information technologies, making classification with respect to the validity, truth and practicability of knowledge. In these respects, children are positioned within a discourse on technology as the subjects whose mental capacities and knowledge accumulation are to be augmented with information technologies.[140]

These promoted characteristics of self of the learning subjects are also in direct correlation with the social, economic and individual basis of the curriculum that are explained in the Introductory Booklet of the Primary School Programs for the first-fifth Grades. For instance, in the part where social basis of the curriculum is narrated, one of the aims of the curriculum is stated as to provide students with the quality of flexibility in order to prepare them for adaptation to constant global changes. It is highlighted that

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[139] Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. "Fen ve Teknoloji Sunumu" accessed December, 20, 2012 http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/prgmufredat.aspx (See the Appendix, p115 for its Turkish)

[140] David Shutkin. "The Deployment of Information Technology in the Field of Education and the Augmentation of the Child". 213.

learners should have the consciousness of the changes and they should be guarded

against the obstacles that can occur in time of turnovers. Therefore, the novel

curriculum is suggested as:

> It prioritizes gaining consciousness about changing in a positive way since
> change is inevitable in life. It provides guidance to students in not being
> influenced from the turnovers or from the obstacles that can occur in time of
> turnovers, and taking advantage of the developments; in adapting to the
> turnovers; in gaining abilities of risk management; and in taking risks if
> necessary.[141]

At this point, the quality of being flexible in the meaning of taking utmost advantage of

the changes and avoiding risks is underlined as an important characteristic that a learner

should gain. Another quality of learners that is aimed to be achieved as the economic

basis of the curriculum is to have an entrepreneurial mind and soul. This quality is

expressed through the remarks that follow:

> The programs put importance on a stabilized, productive, and sustainable
> economy and they demand students to be integrated into the economic life.
> Therefore, it is not contended with analyzing and producing ideas about the
> economic life of society, but it also provides guidance for evaluating the
> economic opportunities in the rapidly changing world. In this way, in a
> globalized world, student does not have any hardship in adapting to his/her
> future professional life with an entrepreneurial mind.[142]

As it is explicit in the quote, the economic basis of the curriculum promotes the

entrepreneurship quality of self as an end to be attained. Learning subjects are assumed

to be in need of being integrated into the current economic structures endowed with an

entrepreneur mindset that would make them successful and productive in such a

settlement. With the help of such a quality, subjects are suggested to be prepared for

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[141] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. *İlköğretim 1-5. Sınıf Programları Tanıtım El Kitabı.* 22. (See the Appendix, p 116 for its Turkish)

[142] Ibid. (See the Appendix, p116 for its Turkish)

business life, having already internalized the valid rules and mentality of success in this context.

On the ground of these assumptions and anticipations, there are the assumptions of the curriculum with respect to the individuality of students. Here, both for the social and economic attainments, the importance of subjects' interest and desire for education is emphasized. It is asserted that sustainable self development of learners is crucial for social and economic achievements, which is denoted as one of the primary goals of the education model. In this respect, the curriculum is suggested to cultivate the idea of sustainable learning and education, prompting the essential desire for education. Related to this, the Introductory Booklet indicates that:

> The programs acknowledge that lifelong learning is an indispensible requirement, and this is only possible by enjoying learning during schooling time; for this reason, the programs take some cautions in order for students to enjoy learning and learning to learn.[143]

The same issue is as well touched upon in the text that presents "The New Primary School Programs and new Approaches" "*Yeni İlköğretim Programları ve Yeni Yaklaşımlar*". In this text that discusses the novel educational approach of the curriculum, the ways of flourishing the joy of learning are uttered. For encouragement of education, the instinctual desire for learning in children is pointed out as to be stimulated. It is expressed that: "It is only possible for a child to aspire learning by encouraging his/her desire for researching and natural curiosity."[144] In this way, students are envisaged as subjects having an autonomous and instinctual drive to learn

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[143] Ibid. (See the Appendix, p116 for its Turkish)

[144] Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. "Yeni İlköğretim Programları ve Yeni yaklaşımlar". (See the Appendix, p116 for its Turkish)

more; so, the matter is to unearth this desire as the necessary motive for ongoing education. To put it another way, in this constructivist pedagogical approach, students are considered as having self-autonomy in constituting and managing their education essentially through the desire for education. In this sense, what Lynn Fendler argues regarding the constructivist pedagogies is significant for the present discussion on the particular configuration of self. Fendler points out that:

> […] in constructivist pedagogies, which are advocated for their nonimpositional pedagogies, to be educated means to be motivated to engage in problem solving; the educated subject of constructivism is a "constructed" learner who does not rely on authority for motivation to engage in scientific inquiry. The constructed learner […] embodies the desire to identify with the educational curriculum.[145]

Positioning the learning subjects as autonomous not being in need of external dictation and enforcement for learning depends on the idea that subjects embody the desire for being educated and constant augmentation of their capacities. "In other words, the educable subject is combined with the idea of learning as a norm; the will to to learn is constructed as a mentality."[146]

As it can be inferred from the aforementioned examples from the texts and the language used in the quotes, learning subjects are configured in this particular pedagogic formulation as already having particular qualities and capacities that are to be empowered through constructivist educational principles and student-centered methods. Therefore, all of the targets of the curriculum with respect to the individuality of learning subjects are built upon certain assumptions regarding the "self". To summarize,

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[145] Lynn Fendler. "What is it Impossible to Think? A Genealogy of the Educated Subject" *The Foucault's Challenge*". ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz and Marie Brennan. (New York and London: Teachers College University, 1998.), 58.

[146] Andreas Fejes. "Historicizing the Lifelong Learner: Governmentality and Neoliberal Rule". *Foucault and Lifelong Learning: Governing the Subject*. ed. Andreas Fejes and Katherine Nicoll. (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2008.), 89.

the primary quality of this particular conceptualization of self in this educational model is that learning subjects, who are between seven and eleven years old in this context, have instinctual desire for learning and cultivating their capacities discovering and experiencing more; they are aware of their self qualities, which means they know themselves; they have self-consciousness to take the responsibility of learning; and they are rational enough to take necessary cautions both for their present and future success. Having such personal traits, students are expected to cultivate their selves with skills of learning how to learn; communicating and cooperating with others; utilizing information technologies; developing an entrepreneur mentality; problem solving; flexibility and creativity.

The Promoted Self in the Student Centered Education Model and the Ideal Worker in Knowledge Economy

The promoted characteristics of an educated subject are actually the tools of identification of the valid norms and values related to the configuration of self. In other words, underlying the discursive formation of the qualities of the educated subjects in the reform documents and texts analyzed in this study, there inscribes a specific sort of political classification of skills as the appropriate and desirable ones. "One consequence of this political positioning is that 'desirable' is now defined by what is institutionally demanded."[147] Such political classification of skills as the desirable is informed by the

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[147] Lynn Fendler. "What is it Impossible to Think? A Genealogy of the Educated Subject". 58.

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precepts of social and economic presumptions and propositions. In this respect, there is a direct correspondence with the skills and attainments specified in the student-centered education model launched in Turkey and the ones uttered in the documents that promote the general characteristics of the work force in the global knowledge economy settlement.

One of those primary documents that highlight the expectations from education in the neoliberal economic regime of knowledge economy is the "Education Policy Analysis" published in 2001 by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Prepared by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation within OECD, this report mentions the distinctive workplace competences in neoliberal regime of knowledge economy, which are detected based on comparative researches conducted in several OECD countries. According to this identification, the leading "workplace competences" that are favoured in the current economic organization of companies and sectors can be gathered under three groups: inter-personal skills, intra-personal skills, technological or informational and communicational skills (ICT).[148] The skills stated as inter-personal ones entail "team work and ability to co-operate in pursuit of a common objective; leadership capabilities". Intra-personal skills are "motivation and attitude; the ability to learn; problem solving skills; effective communication with

[148] OECD, Center of Educational Research and Innovation. *Education Policy Analysis 2001*. accessed December, 20, 2012. http://www.educarchile.cl/medios/20020108113337.pdf

colleagues and clients; analytical skills."[149] Under the heading of technological and ICT skills, the ability to produce and use information effectively is listed.[150]

These skills defined as workplace competences in the OECD's report indicate the basic demands of the labor market in the knowledge economy. What essentially characterizes this demand is the fact that specific personal traits are favoured as a plus to and even more than the mere academic and technical knowledge. In other words, workers are assumed to bear both specific personal and technical qualifications. The reason of this diversification in the types of workplace competences is related to occurrence of the new workplace practices and appearance of new work sectors.[151] According to the OECD's survey, these new working practices that promote workplace competences are based on job rotation, team-based work organizations or management structures, which overrate personal qualities such as flexibility, leadership or cooperation beside academic achievements.[152] On the other hand, extending service sector is also pointed out as an important factor that is influential in the encouragement of the workplace competences. In the survey, it is indicated that workers employed in this sector are demanded to have skills such as "ability to operate in an unclear and ever-changing environment; the capacity to deal with non-routine and abstract work processes; the ability to handle decisions and responsibilities; group and interactive

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[149] Ibid.

[150] Ibid. 100.

[151] Ibid. 107, 109.

[152] Ibid. 109.

work; and system wide or broad understanding."[153] Additionally, there is another aspect

of the new work practices, which is the introduction of the information and

communication technologies in every sector, company and job, which has significant

implications for the types of workplace competences. In this sense, there is a direct

relation between the information technologies, work organization and individual skills;

a combination of at least basic knowledge and competence of ICT technologies

combined with personal and management skills such as communication, team-work,

problem solving, creativity and leadership have become the preferred qualities.[154]

Defined as the "workplace competences" in the OECD's report, these skills

indicate the changing configuration of the abilities demanded from workers along with

the occurrence of new work sectors and work practices. This shift in the production

patterns and the required skills is as well mentioned in the World Bank's report titled as

"Lifelong Learning in the Global Knowledge Economy". The report indicates that:

> In traditional industries most jobs require employees to learn how to perform
> routine functions, which, for the most part, remain constant over time. Most
> learning takes place when a worker starts a new job. In the knowledge economy,
> change is so rapid that workers constantly need to acquire new skills. Firms can
> no longer rely solely on new graduates or new labor market entrants as the
> primary source of new skills and knowledge. Instead, they need workers who are
> willing and able to update their skills throughout their lifetimes.[155]

The key skills that are conceptualized as different from the ones entailed by traditional

industrial workers and assumed to be embodied by an ideal worker in the knowledge

economy settlement are listed in this particular report of the World Bank as "acting

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[153] Ibid. 110.

[154] Ibid. 112.

[155] The World Bank. *Lifelong Learning in the Global Knowledge Economy*: *Challenges for the Developing Countries*, 2003. accessed December, 20, 2012
http://www.mp.gov.rs/resursi/dokumenti/dok199-eng-WB_lifelonglearning.pdf

autonomously, using tools interactively and functioning in socially heterogeneous groups."[156] What is meant by "acting autonomously" is basically explicated as self-awareness. Here, actualizing one's self capacities, exercising autonomy making proper choices, acting future oriented, constituting career plans and taking responsibility are included as the properties of an autonomously acting subjects. The skill of "using tools" refers to the utilization of technological means as a vehicle of dialogue. It also entails abilities of realizing the potential of new tools, using information and technology interactively and effectively to achieve tasks. The skill of "functioning in socially heterogeneous groups" takes attention to the multicultural and multinational work settlements, emphasizing the abilities of interacting and cooperating with different people, acknowledging the cultural differences, and managing conflicts.[157] Additional to these general skills, the report also mentions the significance of technical, interpersonal and methodological skills, which are similar to those mentioned in the document "Education Policy Analysis" by OECD. To summarize, "Technical skills include literacy, foreign language, math, science, problem solving, and analytical skills. Interpersonal skills include teamwork, leadership, and communication skills. Methodological skills include the ability to learn on one's own, to pursue lifelong learning, and to cope with risk and change."[158]

As it can be noticed, the skills mentioned in these reports and documents of OECD and World Bank are in direct correspondence with the targeted abilities and attainments of the student-centered education model launched in the primary school

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[156] Ibid. 21, 22.

[157] Ibid. 22.

[158] Ibid.

level in Turkey. In this respect, it is obvious that the "self" configured in the student-centered curriculum as embodiment of specific capacities is actually inscribed by the tropes of knowledge economy as articulated in the reports of World Bank and OECD. This inscription, however, is not only apparent and influential in defining the promoted skills as the desired characteristics of an educated individual. It is also effective in determining the required course of action both for institutional practice and subjects for creating the ideal learning and educated selves. In this respect, both in the texts related to the curriculum reform in Turkey and the documents of OECD and World Bank that accentuate the leading educational precepts in the world, the importance of life-long learning principles and practices are emphasized as an indispensible means of responding to the challenges of knowledge economy and of creating a work force equipped with the required qualifications and skills. So, the notion of life-long learning emerges as a discourse in these texts as a necessary principle of educational policies. In other words, the notion of lifelong learning is promulgated both in the national and international policies as a discourse, which basically argue that in order to sustain competitive power in global knowledge economy and information society, lifelong learning as a capacity and practice of individuals, institutions and educational systems must be brought forth.[159]

Lifelong learning basically means continuation of learning throughout one's life. To put in another way, it supposes constant augmentation of one's abilities, competences and knowledge in every stage and settlement of life. In this sense, as it is

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[159] Katherine Nicoll and Andreas Fejes. "Mobilizing Foucault in Studies of Lifelong Learning". *Foucault and Lifelong Learning: Governing the Subject*. ed. Andrew Fejes and Katherine Nicoll. (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2008.), 2.

indicated in the World Bank's report, "lifelong learning is education for knowledge economy". As already mentioned, in the knowledge economy setting, individuals are expected to successfully cope with rapid knowledge production by constant renewal and increase of their knowledge accumulation. Beside augmenting their technical and academic capacities, they are also presumed to have improvement and flexibility in their personal traits, adapting their qualifications and skills to the requirements of the competitive knowledge economy. Nikolas Rose discusses lifelong learning as the "economic capitalization of self" indicating that: "The new citizen is required to engage in a ceaseless work of training and retraining, skilling and reskilling, enhancement of credentials and preparation for a life of incessant job seeking: life is to become a continuous economic capitalization of life."[160] In those respects, although having great importance, the formal education within the borders of schools is not considered as adequate for granting the qualities of an educated self. Subjects are encouraged to internalize the idea of lifelong learning and training, strengthening their interest and desire for learning in every aspect and time of life in order to provide self development that can bestow them with economic advantage in job seeking and employment.

The idea of economic self capitalization by lifelong learning is the basic discursive tool in the reports of World Bank and OECD that propose nations to implement required policy regulations which can promote the principles of lifelong learning in their educational systems. Suggested to be launched especially in the developing countries, the key features of lifelong learning as a an institutional practice are briefly explained in the "Education Policy Analysis" by OECD as: first, lifelong

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[160] Nikolas Rose. *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.), 161.

learning is attentive to learning opportunities that can be comprised both in formal and non-formal education; second, it treats the learner as the centre of attention considering his/her needs and demands in the primary stage; third, it emphasizes the importance of motivation for self-directed and self-paced learning; fourth, it is responsive to all kinds of objectives of education such as social, cultural, economic or personal development.[161]

These features of lifelong learning are suggested in this report as the basis of an ideal educational reform. Here, lifelong learning is foreground as the idea of personal improvement of subjects as a condition of social and economic betterment that should be provided via appropriate educational rearrangements. Therefore, as a norm of recent educational policies, it cultivates the importance of self-learning and self-improvement of subjects, which is to be encouraged as a principle expected to be internalized and practiced by learning subjects.

In the curriculum reform launched in the primary school level in Turkey, this is also the grounding idea. It is underlined that the student-centered education model based on the constructivist principles attempts to enhance lifelong learning opportunities beginning from childhood, by conducting the required educational methods and providing individuals with the necessary attainments that can make them lifelong learning subjects throughout their lives. At this point, the primary quality that makes subjects as lifelong learning individuals is explained as the skill of learning to learn, which provides subjects with the competence for perpetual self-training. In this sense the principle of learning how to learn emerges as the most emphasized one in the

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[161] OECD, Center of Educational Research and Innovation. *Education Policy Analysis 2001*. 11.

curriculum and in the related texts. For example, in the Student-Centered Education

Application Model, a successfully educated subject is defined as the one who embraces

the idea of lifelong learning and who has learned how to learn and how to attain

knowledge by himself/herself.[162] Moreover, the Introductory Booklet of the Primary

School Programs states among the objectives of the curriculum that the course programs

target to encourage students for lifelong learning by flourishing their interest and desire

for learning.[163] In these respects, constructivism and student-centered education models

are elevated in the texts as the ideal educational model and method that can promote

lifelong learning practices of self, endowing subjects with the skills of self-learning and

self-construction of knowledge through which they can continuously train themselves

and increase their self capital. Positioning students as the locus of a desire for perpetual

training and learning, the curriculum, in this way, articulates the importance of the

encouragement of discovering and improving the personal ways of learning as a

primary source of lifelong learning practices.

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[162] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Eğitim Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı. *Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim Uygulama Modeli.* 2.

[163] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. *İlköğretim 1-5. Sınıf Programları Tanıtım El Kitabı.* 21.

Disciplining and Government through the Idealization of Specific Qualities of Self

as the "Techniques of Self"

Allocating specific qualities and skills as the characteristics of an educated subject, all these texts related to the curriculum and the curriculum itself do not only produce utterances as the definition of an idealized self -which is in this particular educational model in Turkey a lifelong learning subject equipped with the skills of self-learning and self-improving. As being discursive tools of policy implementation, these texts essentially promote certain forms of identity and subjectivity as desirable and acceptable. In this sense, they pose judgements on the subjective qualities of students as the demanded and not demanded ones, designating the parameters of disciplining, regularizing and governing behaviours' of learning subjects in accordance with the institutionally desired qualities of subjectivity and social form.[164] In other words, in these texts, the subjective and social spaces of intervention and regulation are pointed as to be governed and regulated in order to achieve certain ends. Moreover, beside signalling the spaces of regulation and intervention, the appropriate techniques and strategies of government are also implied. However, before elaborating upon all of these specific techniques of government and regulation in the student centered educational model along with a discussion on the pointed out spaces of intervention, a brief discussion on the concept of "government" should be carried out, in order to grasp better what is meant by government, techniques of government, regulation and subjectivity, and how they are employed in the student-centered education model.

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[164] James D. Marshall. "Foucault and Educational Research". *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge.* ed. Stephen J. Ball. (London: Routledge, 1990.), 15.

<u>The Notions of Government, Techniques of Self and Practices of Self</u>

Michel Foucault conceptualizes the notion of government "in the broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour."[165] In his discussions on government, Foucault stresses the point that government is different from coercive practices of power and domination that impose laws and rules on men. According to him, government is a matter of "disposing things: that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws […] to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved."[166] Therefore, governing conducts of people is differentiated from simple domination. As Nikolas Rose argues: "To govern humans is not to crush their capacity to act, but to acknowledge it and utilize it for one's own objectives."[167] In other words, government works through recognition of people's freedom and capacity for action and it is exercised by implementing certain tactics to regulate that subjective capacity to act. At this point, desires, beliefs, interests and characteristics of people emerge as spaces of intervention and government, where power penetrates through diverse tactics in order to regulate conducts of people. In this respect, the definition suggested by Mitchell Dean offers a good comprehension of the concept of government:

> Government is any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a
> multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and

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[165] Michel Foucault. "On the Government of Living" *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth.* ed. Paul Rabinow. (New York: New York Press, 1997.), 81.

[166] Michel Foucault. "Governmentality". *The Foucault Effect.* ed. Graham Burchell, et.al. (USA: Chicago Press, 1991.), 95.

[167] Nikolas Rose. *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought.* 4.

forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape conduct by working through our desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs, for definite but shifting ends [...].[168]

By concerning bodies, emotions and thoughts of individual, governmental strategies of power actually designate how one relates to himself/herself, how s/he constitute his/her personality and through which codes of morality and ethics. Therefore, as Dean indicates "government concerns not only practices of government but also practices of self."[169] By eliciting, promoting, and fostering specific abilities, competences, qualities, status, and norms of morality and individuality for agents to embrace, governmental practices point out certain techniques and practices of self, which are to be experienced by agents not through force but through willing actualization.[170] That is to say, governmental tactics and procedures attempt to regulate how people constitute, experience and practice their selves, shaping the direction of their interests, desires and decisions. So, through government, people's will to act is modulated towards certain ends to be achieved by proposing techniques and practices of self.

At this point, the notion of "techniques and practices of self" should be mentioned in a more detailed way to clarify the relation between the techniques and strategies of governmental power practices and subjectivity of agents. Michel Foucault defines the techniques of self as "the procedures, which no doubt exist in every civilization, suggested or prescribed to individuals in order to determine their identity, maintain it, or transform it in terms of a certain number of ends, through relations of

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[168] Mitchell Dean. *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society.* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999.), 11.

[169] Ibid. 12.

[170] Ibid. 32.

self-mastery or self-knowledge."[171] In this respect, the techniques of self constitute the

primary tactic of governmental power by appealing to the individuality of subjects and

their apprehension of ethics in order to shape and transform it in a certain way.

However, this tactic of governmental power is successful only in condition that subjects

internalize and experience these techniques of self as the practices of their own

identities. That is, techniques of self presume active and free agents that are to actualize

the offered procedures as their own individual choices and their own moral attachments.

As Foucault indicates, "the subject constitutes itself in an active fashion through

practices of self (which are) nevertheless not something invented by individual

himself."[172] These practices are already designated as the cultural, social and ethical

models, being suggested or imposed upon agents as the ideal identity and form of

subjectivity.[173] By taking the techniques of self on themselves and practicing them as

their own individuality, subjects indeed act upon themselves and they self-govern their

actions, desires, interests, thoughts and ethics in line with the targets of the

governmental rationality. In this way, governmental strategies are actualized by free,

active and at the same time self-governing and self-moralized subjects. Therefore, as

Graham Burchell suggests referring to Foucault, government is a sort of contact point of

techniques of power and techniques of self.[174] While techniques and strategies of

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[171] Michel Foucault. "Subjectivity and Truth". *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth.* ed. Paul Rabinow. (New York: New York Press, 1997.), 87.

[172] Foucault Michel. "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom". *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth.* ed. Paul Rabinow. (New York: New York Press, 1997.), 291.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Michel Foucault. "Truth and Subjectivity" quoted in Graham Burchell "Liberal Government and Techniques of the Self". *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Rationalities of Government.* edited by Andrew Barry, et. al, (Great Britain: Uni. of Chicago Press, 1996.), 20.

governmental power determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to the

certain ends, the techniques of self permits subjects to act on their own souls and bodies

in order to transform themselves to attain a form of happiness and morality. Therefore,

the techniques of power and self are in constant dialogue, appealing to each other.[175]

The Governmental Rationality and the Techniques of Self in the Student-Centered Education Model: Self-Responsibility

In the light of this discussion on the notion of "government", "techniques of power and

techniques of self", it can be suggested that the curriculum and pedagogical

assumptions are indeed the spaces where both the techniques of power and techniques

of self are articulated and re/produced. In this sense, curriculum is constructed upon a

particular sort of envisioning and configuring of the self and subjectivity to be

cultivated through certain techniques of power. In this framework, for the present

discussion on the student-centered education model and the constructivist principles

adopted in the Turkish education system, empowerment of individuality through life-

long learning principles and the specific capacities and skills -such as being self-

learning, creative, entrepreneur, capable of using information technologies, able to solve

problems- are significant clues regarding the employment of techniques of power and

techniques of self. All of these issues regarding the configuration of self indeed reveal

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[175] David Schaafsma. "Performing the Self: Constructing Written and Curricular Fictions". *The Foucault's Challenge*. ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz and Marie Brennan. (New York and London: Teachers College University, 1998.), 256.

how and for which ends the governmental power works. That is, the particular discussion on the individualistic aspect of the curriculum and the promoted skills together with the implications of the definition of successful learner as such are the recourses for an examination of the mentality of government implicit in the present educational reform. Underlying the emphasis on the individuality of learners and the detected traits and competences to be augmented in learning subjects, there is actually a specific form of government of conduct along with a certain figure of subjectivity of self, which involves determined possibilities of action and moral precepts; the new curriculum design offers a certain kind of inscription of norms and identifications of subjectivity and self as the techniques of government. For this reason, it is essential to investigate these norms and moral attachments attributed to the self and subjectivity of learners as they are highlighted in the student-centered education model for primary schools in order to reveal the regulatory and governmental rationality and techniques in the curriculum reform.

The essential aspect of the norms of subjectivity as it is configured in the curriculum and the student centered educational model is the self-responsibilization of students. Self-responsibility emerges as a basic governmental technique in the curriculum, and in the pedagogical regulation in general, which has several implications regarding the configuration and governing of self. It is possible to find various expressions in the related documents and texts that articulate the importance of self-responsibility of students; in these texts, self-responsibility is uttered directly or by way of implication as a vital value to be flourished in order to cultivate the demanded characteristics of an educated subject. Here, self-responsibilization is fundamentally

utilized in the meaning of attributing the responsibility of learning and attaining

knowledge to students rather than to teachers. Moreover, it also embodies moral

assumptions such as being responsible of one's own actions and development. In this

way, self-responsibility emerges as a technique of government and technique of self,

which embodies assertions regarding constructing and governing an identity and

performing it in an ethical way.

As a value and norm of the ideal self, self-responsibility is employed as a trope

in various ways in the student centered educational model. The first aspect of the idea of

self-responsibility is the realization of the autonomy of educated subjects in the learning

process, by attributing the role of attaining knowledge to students. In this respect, the

Introductory Booklet of the Primary School Programs states that: "Students should take

the responsibility of their own learning, and they should realize their increasing

responsibility in each grade."[176] Student-Centred Educational Application Model also

expresses similar remarks about the responsibilization of students, through the assertion

that: "Students are expected to take their own responsibility of learning."[177] As it can be

inferred from these quotes, students are expected in this educational arrangement to take

the responsibility of learning on themselves, one of the essential consequences of which

is the switch in the relations of autonomy in class. By ascribing the responsibility of

learning to students, the new educational arrangement indeed offers a shift of autonomy

in a classroom setting from teachers to students. As being self-responsible agents,

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[176] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. *İlköğretim 1-5. Sınıf Programları Tanıtım El Kitabı.* 25. (See the Appendix, p116 for its Turkish)

[177] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Eğitim Araştırma ve Geliştirme Dairesi Başkanlığı. *Öğrenci Merkezli Eğitim Uygulama Modeli.* 9. (See the Appendix, p116 for its Turkish)

students are also assumed to be capable of controlling and regulating their learning processes having the autonomy of constructing and utilizing knowledge by active participation. In other words, as also mentioned in the preceding part of the section, students are expected to be autonomous and responsible as being self-learning and active subjects, having skills, capacities and interest of seeking, finding, constructing and using knowledge in their own personal and creative ways. In this respect, one of the implications of self-responsible learning subjects is revealed as self-autonomy and active agency in the process of learning.

The other aspect of how self-responsibility is employed as a norm of subjectivity is the idea of growing self-consciousness of identity. Being autonomous agents of learning, students are also responsible for knowing their own personal traits and qualities, according to which they are expected to direct and improve their interests and capacities throughout their educational life. Therefore, in order to have the autonomy of their education in accordance with their own interests, students should have the knowledge of themselves; they should have a consciousness of their own identity, realizing and improving their qualities and competences. In this respect, a student involved in the context of student-centered education "knows herself and she is aware of her individual characteristics; she is willing for self-improvement; she actualizes herself."[178]

All of these norms of active agency, self-autonomy and self-consciousness based on the idea of self-responsibility actually indicate the techniques of self boosted

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[178] Ibid. (See the Appendix, p116 for its Turkish)

in the student-centred educational model to be idealized and attained by students as the values of identity. In other words, these techniques of self are imposed on learners as the appropriate traits to be practiced. Furthermore, these values are attached a moral quality, being the measurement of discipline and success. In this educational model, discipline is stated to be practiced not through external force, but by way of individuals' willing participation and self-responsibility.[179] Student-centered education model acknowledges that discipline and obeying the rules are the practices to be admitted and conducted by students as self-responsibility.

"It acknowledges that obeying rules and discipline is for the sake of students, and therefore it expects students to take this task."[180] Such moral assertions ascribed to self-responsibility are as well supported in the particular course programs. One of them is the Life Science Course (*Hayat Bilgisi*). Here, in the part where the targeted attainments are listed, responsibility is explicated as an issue that has various moral inferences, some of which are:

> To express the importance of realizing the responsibilities in different stages of life and the significance of taking responsibility with respect to individual development; to take the responsibility of their own studies finishing their own duties; to consider the results of their own behavior; to realize the fact that their peers also have responsibilities for a better world.[181]

What is basically implied in these statements is that students are liable for realizing and actualizing their own duties and responsibilities. This is also stated in the Introductory Booklet of the Primary School Programs among the principles of the educational model

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[179] Ibid. 21.

[180] Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. "Yeni İlköğretim Programları ve Yeni yaklaşımlar". (See the Appendix, p117 for its Turkish)

[181] Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. "Hayat Bilgisi Sunumu". (See the Appendix, p117 for its Turkish)

as the following: "To be conscious of the fact that an individual determines his/her own duties and responsibilities."[182]

This quality of the student-centered education model regarding the envisioning of self as self-responsible, self-autonomous and self-disciplined is in direct relation with the governmental rationality of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, as a political economy theory, does not only presume a way of regulating the economic activity of nations and firms. It also produces a rationality of government and rule of subjectivities with the purpose of sustaining the functioning of economy according to the presumptions of neoliberalism. One of the essentials of neoliberal government is the "promotion of individual and national well-being by their (people's) responsibility and enterprise."[183] As Rose indicates, in the occurrence of such a governmental rationality, the reconceptualization of the role of state has a significant part for sustaining the law and order for the establishment of a free market. However, it is the private agents and individuals who can make the markets function.

> The state can never have the information to enable it to judge and plan each micro-event in a free-market society. Only individual economic actors possess the information to enable them to make the best judgements on risks and potentials in order to guide their conduct.[184]

Positioning individual agents as the main actors of economic functioning, neoliberalism seeks to govern society through the governance of individual aspirations towards the ethics of free market exchange. In this respect, neoliberalism promotes the belief that

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[182] Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. *İlköğretim 1-5. Sınıf Programları Tanıtım El Kitabı.* 20. (See the Appendix, p117 for its Turkish)

[183] Rose, Nikolas. *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought.* 139.

[184] Ibid.

individual, social, and national well being and prosperity depends upon the cultivation

of individuals' capacities and characteristics for an utmost adaptation to the economic

structure. In this envisioning of social betterment, individuals should practice the means

of enterprising themselves, being capable of managing their own life and possible

risks.[185] Therefore, the production of self-responsible and actively seeking subjects

becomes the main governmental issue of neoliberalism.

> Within this regime of the actively responsible self, individuals are to fulfil their
> national obligation not through their relations of dependency and obligation to
> one another, but through seeking to *fulfil themselves* within a variety of micro-
> moral domains or communities –families, workplaces, schools, leisure
> associations, and neighbourhoods.[186]

To put it another way, in the neoliberal regime, individuals are governed through their

aspirations for self-responsibility and self-actualization as active agents. As Graham

Burchell puts it:

> Liberalism, particularly its modern versions, constructs a relationship between
> government and the governed that increasingly depends upon the ways in which
> individuals are required to assume the status of being the subjects of their own
> lives, upon the ways in which they fashion themselves as certain kinds of
> subjects, upon the ways in which they practice their freedom. Government
> increasingly impinges upon individuals in their very individuality, in their
> relationships to themselves in the conduct of their lives.[187]

As a general inference from these discussions related to neoliberal regime of

government and self-responsibility of students, it can be suggested that this pedagogical

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[185] Nikolas Rose. "Governing 'Advanced' Liberal Democracies". *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Rationalities of Government.* eds. Andrew Barry, et.al. (Great Britain: Uni. of Chicago Press, 1996.) , 57.

Mitchell Dean. *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society.* 166.

[186] Nikolas Rose. "Governing 'Advanced' Liberal Democracies". 56.

[187] Graham Burchell. "Liberal Government and Techniques of Self". *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Rationalities of Government.* ed. Andrew Barry, et.al. (Great Britain: Uni. of Chicago Press, 1996.), 30.

arrangement of student-centered education model ultimately aims at providing students with the tools of controlling the self through detecting and fulfilling specific duties and responsibilities on their own. In this sense, it is possible to maintain that it promotes the neoliberal government of individuals beginning from the level of primary school. It configures the educated subject as self-responsible and self-governing; the moral relation of the learning subjects with themselves is attempted to be regulated with an aim to "produce the human being as a moral creature capable of exercising responsible stewardship and judgement over its own conduct in terms of certain externally prescribed moral principles."[188] To put it another way, learning subjects are made accountable for their won conducts and they are subjected to their own self-regulation.[189]

Such an approach to education that prioritizes the self-governing capacity of learners as a tool of discipline and moral regulation is therefore a specific one differentiated from the previous pedagogical perspectives. In the teacher-centered educational models based on the utilization of reinforcements and didactic transition of knowledge, the self is configured as to be disciplined by external power of a sovereign and autonomous teacher. However, the student-centered education model, which establishes a neoliberal approach to subjectivity and government, cultivates the self-disciplining capacity of learners by way of empowering their individuality in accordance with the values of self-responsibility and self-autonomy; that is, these

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[188] Nikolas Rose. *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought.* 42.

[189] Mitchell Dean. *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society.* 11.

educational methods produce governable individuals, who already conduct their own

bodies, actions, interest or desires.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The student-centered education model launched at the level of primary school in 2005 is among the significant curriculum and perspective changes in the Turkish education history. In this thesis, the elements that distinguish the student-centered education model within the context of knowledge economy and neoliberal regime of government are discussed. From this aspect, this thesis does not impose a judgement on the success of the reform. It does not either investigate to what extent the student-centered education model is applied in schools. Indeed, throughout the interviews and research, the problems and deficits in the applications were often mentioned as an issue of concern. The complaints were mostly about the lack of the required materials in schools along with the insufficient informing of teachers about the qualities of the curriculum. The interviewees especially point out the difficulty of adaptation of the teachers to the new approach, who had been teaching through the old methods for years before the implementation of the student-centered education model. All these actually indicate that there are considerable problems about how the student-centered education model applied and how much its educational principles are internalized. However, these problems deserve a distinct and comprehensive study with a specific focus on the ideas and problems of teachers about the curriculum; the conditions of schools with respect to their suitability for application of this educational model; and, students' experiences.

As in the case of the problems regarding the application process, the new education model and the curriculum actually offer a wide variety of issues to be

discussed. However, the focus of this thesis is on the correlations between the student-centered education model with the presumptions and requirements of knowledge economy in the neoliberal regime of political economy, which has remarkable significance in constituting the rationality of the reform.

The transition from the industrial economic structure to the knowledge economy based on information and communication technologies and knowledge transactions constitutes the basic cause of the institutional demand for such an educational reform that can promote the essentials of such an economic regime through the means of schooling. This institutional demand for a different educational model prioritizes the skills and abilities of individuals which can cultivate the means of knowledge production and knowledge usage along with the practices of life-long learning. The articulation of the demand for such an educational model had already been stated in the reports of State Planning Organization and the decisions of the National Educational Council for a decade before the official implementation of the student-centered education model. It was also one of the primary targets of the agreement signed with the World Bank in 1990, as a result of which the National Education Improvement Project *(Milli Eğitimi Geliştirme Projesi)* was launched. Moreover, in the same period, the Curriculum Laboratory Schools were established in order to develop and try the application of a different curriculum, which would enable learners to attain the capacities of knowledge construction instead of didactic knowledge transition and memorization. As the primary attempts to conduct a reform in the field of education, mainly entailing a restructuring of the curriculum and the pedagogical approaches, these initiations and demands underline the significance of the replacements of the traditional

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methods of education with that of the modern ones especially due the post-industrial economic restructuring towards knowledge economy along with the improvements in information and communication technologies. In this regard, the related documents mostly mention the vital importance of the urgent adaptation to the neoliberal regime of knowledge economy, which highlights knowledge and information transactions as the primary source of capital in a setting of global free market.

This thesis regards that his historical transition in political economy constitutes the main discursive ground of the student-centered education model, which was implemented nationwide in 2005 after all the attempts that had been going on for almost a decade. This reform in the educational model and approach is considered as a vital national strategy for a proper adaptation to the contemporary world trends which have promoted the individual capacities of knowledge production, creative usage of knowledge, problem solving, entrepreneurship, and risk taking. In this respect, a specific national role is attributed to the student-centered education model, which is expected to create the means of economic development by flourishing the required individual skills and attainments.

Being proposed as one of the biggest education projects in Turkish history, the student-centered education model is introduced through its distinctions from the previous educational approaches. These distinctions are also worth to discuss as tools of rationality and justification of the reform. Here, the official process of preparing the curriculum outstands as a distinctive quality. Both in the reports and in the interviews, it is suggested that this curriculum and perspective change in education was conducted by providing the utmost participation of all the related agents and groups. Moreover, new

education methods are introduced in the content and form of the curriculum. However, the most distinguishing aspect of the student-centered education model is its philosophical approach, which is determined as "constructivism" as opposed to "behaviorism". In this regard, the subjective and relativist perspective to knowledge comes to the forth in the teaching methods of student-centered education model as opposed to the objectivist and didactic perspective of behaviorist approaches, which were more influential in the previous teacher-centered education methods. Moreover, the constructivist educational principles highlight the individual qualities and characteristics of learners in constituting knowledge by way of combining past and present personal and social experiences. By situating learner to the center of knowledge acquisition and construction, constructivist principles of student-centered education render students as active and responsible subjects in the process of education. It also suggests a shift of autonomy in a classroom setting from teacher to student. In this way, through the constructivist principles and approach, student-centered education model puts forward a distinct definition of learner and educated subjects, which designates a distinct conceptualization of "self". And, in this conceptualization self, the correlations of the assumptions of neoliberal regime of knowledge economy and the student-centered education model are revealed at most.

In order to investigate and discuss the conceptualization of self in the student-centered education model in correlation with the requirements of knowledge economy and neoliberalism, the targeted attainment and skills to be empowered in the education model and the course programs are examined in this thesis. As the related documents and texts recurrently indicate, these attainments expected to be developed by learners

actually constitute the foundational precepts of the reform, according to which the methods and qualities of the education model are designated. In other words, the specific assumptions and expectations regarding the "self", the essentials and goals of the curriculum are determined. In this framework, this education model configures the learning subjects briefly as having an instinctual desire for learning; being aware of their identities and selves; having self-consciousness, self-autonomy, and therefore self-responsibility; being attentive for their future success; and, being prepared for the risks in their lives. These assumed qualities of learning subjects' selves constitute the general characteristics. On these personal traits, students are expected to build other capacities, skills, and qualities such as learning to learn, effective communication, cooperating with other, problem solving, flexibility, creativity, effective usage of information technologies, and entrepreneurial mentality.

In this thesis, these qualities of self are evaluated as the tools of definitions of the valid norms and values regarding the conceptualization of self, which has a political aspect. In other words, underlying these qualities of educated subjects, there is a political classification of skills as the appropriate and desirable ones, which actually indicate the inscription of the social and economic precepts. In this sense, it is suggested in the thesis that there is a direct correspondence between the promoted qualities of educated subjects in the student-centered education model and those of the ideal worker in the global knowledge economy settlement. In order to evaluate this correspondence, the "Education Policy Analysis" published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank's report titled as "Lifelong Learning in the Global Knowledge Economy" are examined in comparison to the

assumptions of the student-centered education model. Both of the documents of OECD and the World Bank mention that in the contemporary setting of knowledge economy, the demands of the labor market have shifted towards competences such as interpersonal and intrapersonal skills as a plus to academic and technical achievements. It is stated that the ideal worker should have the means and characteristics of life-long learning, as a tool for constant self-improvement. The skills mentioned in these texts as indispensible characteristics of ideal knowledge economy worker are in direct correlation with those favoured in the student-centered education model, which proves that this educational arrangement in the Turkish education system target in the first place to adapt the citizens to knowledge economy as productive agents.

All these utterances related to the configuration of self and skills of educated subjects are considered in this thesis as the discursive tools of policy implementation. In this regard, it is maintained that they actually indicate the spaces of intervention, regulation, and government, the primary of which is in this case the subjectivity of learners. So, the particular conceptualization of self re/produces the parameters of discipline and government of individuals in accordance with the demanded qualities and skills of subjects in the setting of knowledge economy. In other words, the determined skills to be empowered cultivate certain forms and techniques of government as the practices of self to be actualized by subjects by means of schooling. The essential aspect of the governmental and discipline strategy in the student-centered education model is suggested as self-responsibilization of students, which would provide them with the means of self-awareness and self-fulfilment. Being self-responsible subjects, students are envisioned to govern their own conducts in line with the institutionally desired

precepts of subjectivity. In other words, students are liable to take the responsibility of their own achievement, by empowering their skills and capacities in accordance with the detected ones in the curriculum.

This kind of approach to discipline and government of subjects in the student-centered education model is actually an articulation of governmental rationality of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism also suggests the government of individuals by means of their subjection to their own selves, conducting their own conducts. In this respect, this thesis makes the ultimate claim that student-centered education model expects to produce self-governing individuals, attempting to establish the neoliberal regime of government in schools. From a more general aspect, this pedagogical arrangement targets to produce ideal subjects for development and well functioning of knowledge economy; and, for this purpose, it employs neoliberal regime of government. In this respect, the student-centered education model introduces a new perspective not only for pedagogical arrangements, but also for the government of the subjects in a setting of the new economy.

APPENDIX

TURKISH QUOTES

1) Footnote 34: Eğitim, istenilen bir yaşama düzenine ulaşmak çabası olan
kalkınmanın en etkili araçlarından biridir. Ulaşılmak istenen düzenin değerlerini
yerleştirmek, toplumu bu hedefe yöneltecek kişi ve grup davranışlarını yaratmak
buna engel olabilecek değer ve davranışları değiştirmek eğitim yoluyla olur.
Eğitim aynı zamanda kalkınma çabasının gerçekleşmesi için gerekli nitelikte ve
sayıda elemanların yetiştirilmesinde de başlıca yoldur.

2) Footnote 38: Türk Milletinin bütün fertlerini: 1) [...] Atatürk milliyetçiliğine
bağlı; Türk Milletinin milli, ahlaki, insani ve manevi ve kültürel değerlerini
benimseyen, koruyan ve geliştiren; [...] 2) [...] hür ve bilimsel düşünme gücüne
sahip kişiler olarak yetiştirmek [...]; 3) İlgi, istidat ve kabiliyetlerini geliştirecek
gerekli bilgi, beceri ve davranışlar [...] kazandırmak suretiyle hayata hazırlamak
ve onların, kendilerini mutlu kılacak ve toplumun mutluluğuna katkıda
bulunacak bir meslek sahibi olmalarını sağlamaktır.

3) Footnote 49: [...] bireysel özelliklerin dikkate alınarak, bilimsel düşünme
becerisine sahip, öğrenmeyi öğrenmiş, üretken, bilgiye ulaşıp kullanabilen,
iletişim kurma becerisine sahip, evrensel değerleri benimsemiş, teknolojiyi etkin
kullanan ve bireylerin kendini gerçekleştirmeleri için eğitim sürecinin; her
aşamada öğrenci katılımını sağlayacak biçimde yeniden yapılandırılmasıdır.

4) Footnote 68: Genelde bütün millet, özelde eğitim camiası olarak gelecek on
yıllardaki eğilimleri iyi okumak ve özgün bir insan modeli geliştirmek
zorundayız. Bu tasavvurun eğitim felsefesi temelini oluşturarak bir an önce

eylem planına geçmek vazgeçilmez bir önceliktir. Öğretim programlarının yenileştirilmesiyle ilgili bu çalışma söz konusu önceliğin bir yansımasıdır.

5) Footnote 72: Bilginin hızla yenilenerek üretildiği çağımızda birey ve toplumun geleceği, bilgiye ulaşma, bilgiyi kullanma ve üretme becerilerine bağlı bulunmaktadır. Bu becerilerin kazanılması ve hayat boyu sürdürülmesi ezberlemeyi değil, bilgi üretimine dayalı çağdaş bir eğitimi gerektirmektedir.

6) Footnote 75: Yaygın eğitim, uluslararası ekonomik ilişkilerin gelişmesi, bilim ve teknolojideki yenilikler, haberleşme imkanlarının artması, "bilgi toplumu" çağına grime eğilimleri, mesleklerin yapısındaki hızlı değişmeler, işgücü piyasasının ani isteklerinin ortaya çıkması gibi sebeplerle plan döneminde daha fazla önem kazanacaktır.

7) Footnote 76: Türkiye'nin gelişmiş ülkeler ile arasındaki "bilgi açığı"nı kapatabilmek için araştırma yapmanın yanısıra bilgilere erişmenin yol ve araçları üzerinde durulacaktır.

8) Footnote 77: Dünyada, üretim sistemlerindeki ve bunun dayandığı teknoloji tabanındaki köklü değişimlerle bilgi toplumuna geçiş süreci yaşanmaktadır. Özellikle enformasyon teknolojisindeki gelişmelerin bir sonucu olan ileri otomasyon teknolojisi, yalnızca basit işgücünü değil, belirli ölçüye kadar beyin gücünü de ikame edebilme olanağını vermiştir. Bu çerçevede kaliteli insangücüne dayanan bilgi yoğun sanayiler ve ileri üretim metodları hızlı gelişmenin belirleyicisi olmuştur. Yeni dönemin belirleyicisi olan bilim ve teknolojiden tam olarak yararlanabilmek için, kurumsal yapıda ve her seviyedeki organizasyon yapılarında önemli değişikliklerin yapılması gerekmektedir.

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9) Footnote 78: İyi eğitilmiş genç nüfus 2000'li yıllarda Türkiye'nin en büyük avantajı olacaktır. Bu nedenle [...] , bilgi üretimine katkıda bulunabilen ve bilgiyi yaratıcı biçimde kullanabilen insangücünün yetiştirilmesi gerekmektedir. Böylece verimliliği ve refahı artırmak mümkün olacaktır.

10) Footnote 80: Eğitim sisteminin temel amacı; Atatürk ilke ve inkilâplarına bağlı, düşünme, algılama ve problem çözme yeteneği gelişmiş, demokratik, özgürlükçü ve manevi değerlere bağlı, yeni fikirlere açık, kişisel sorumluluk duygusuna sahip, milli kültürü özümsemiş, farklı kültürleri yorumlayabilen ve çağdaş uygarlığa katkıda bulunabilen, bilim ve teknoloji üretimine yatkın ve beceri düzeyi yüksek, üretken ve yaratıcı bilgi çağı insanını yetiştirmektir.

11) Footnote 81: Günümüzde insanlık, artık "bilgi toplumu" denilen bir aşamaya ulaşmış bulunmaktadır. Bu aşamada toplumun iyi yetişmiş, bilgili, araştırıcı, üretici, yaratıcı insan gücüne olan ihtiyacı daha da artmıştır. [...] Diğer taraftan bilim ve teknoloji ile toplum yapısındaki sürekli değişme ve gelişmeler, insanlar hangi seviyede örgün eğitim görmüş olurlarsa olsunlar, onların sürekli eğitimlerini kaçınılmaz hâle getirmektedir.

12) Footnote 83: Eğitim programlarının bilgi yükleme karakterli yapısı, yerini bilgiye ulaşma ve araştırma tekniklerinin kazanılmasına bırakmalıdır.

13) Footnote 84: 1)Yeni öğretim programları [...] Atatürk'ün kurduğu Türkiye Cumhuriyeti projesinin gelişerek devamlılığı ilkesini birinci referans noktası olarak ele alır. 2) Yeni öğretim programları dünyada yaşanan tüm değişimleri ve gelişmeleri ikinci referans noktası olarak alır. [...] Bu hareketlerin çıkış noktası, sanayi toplumu için uygun olan eğitim modellerinin bilgi toplumunun rekabetçi yapısını kaldıramaması olarak değerlendirilir. 3) [...] yeni öğretim programları,

üçüncü referans noktası olarak, Avrupa Birliği normlarını, hedeflerini ve eğitim anlayışını kabul eder. 4) Yeni öğretim programları, ülkemizin mevcut eğitim özelliklerinin belirlenmesini, başarı ve başarısızlıkların değerlendirilmesini ve ortaya çıkan sonuçları dördüncü referans olarak kabul eder. PISA, TIMMS ve PIRLS gibi uluslar arası araştırmaların ortaya koyduğu bulgular bu çerçevede ele alınır.

14) Footnote 91: Ekonomik ve toplumsal gelişmelerin bir sonucu olarak, bireylerin yaratıcılık, eleştirel düşünme, problem çözme, karar verme, işbirliği yeteneklerini kazanmalarının daha önem kazanmış olması; kendini ifade edebilen, iletişim kurabilen, girişimcilik ruhuna sahip vatandaşlar yetiştirme gerekliliğinin daha baskın hale gelmesi.

15) Footnote 94: [...] program kurmak hazırlamak için özel ihtisas komisyonları kuruldu. Her bir dersin program komisyonu. Komisyonda belirli sayıda hem eğitim bilimlerine hem de dersin alan bilgisine vakıf belli sayıda akademisyen görevlendirildi. [...] Yine ilgili tarafların, taraf derken uzmanlık anlamında, görüşlerini sunmak, eleştirilerini değerlendirmek için çalıştalar düzenlendi her bir dersle ilgili.

16) Footnote 95: Örneğin bir keresinde kırk kadar sivil toplum kuruluşunu davet ettik. Yani olabildiği kadar bu çalışma yapılırken Türk toplumunun bütün kesimlerinin katkı ve katılımlarını sağlamak ve Türk toplumunun birikimini [...] yansıtma hedefimiz vardı. İlk önce ilköğretim programları küresel envanteri çıkarmıştım. Ne kadar katılım, [...] veri toplama, görüşme, çalıştay, [...] konferanslar, sempozyumlar vs. derken 42,000 civarında [...] katkı ve görüşleri

alınmış ki bu değil Türkiye'de, dünyada belki de program geliştirme sürecindeki katılım zirvesini ifade ediyor.

17) Footnote 102: Şimdi biz yeni programlarda sekiz ortak beceri koyduk. Bu sekiz beceri eleştirel düşünme, yaratıcı düşünme, iletişim, araştırma sorgulama, problem çözme, teknolojiyi etkin kullanma, girişimcilik, Türkçeyi doğru ve güzel kullanma. Onlar bütün derslerin temelinde, merkezinde oldu. Bütün matematiğin de fenin de ortak kaygısı bu becerileri geliştirmek. Ve disiplinler bu becerileri edindirecek yapıda yapılandırıldı.

18) Footnote 103: Kazanım; öğrenme süreci içerisinde planlanmış ve düzenlenmiş yaşantılar sayesinde öğrencilerde görülmesi beklenen bilgi, beceri, tutum ve değerlerdir.

19) Footnote 129: Karmaşık koşullara uyum sağlayabilir bir sistem ve öğrenme teorisinin kavranması ile öğrenme ve okul eğitimi üzerine yeni düşünceler oluşmuştur. Mekanik benzetmelerin yerini, dinamik bir karşıtlık içine yerleştirilen akışkan, organik ve biyolojik metafor almıştır.

20) Footnote 130: Risk, yenilik, deneyim ve mücadeleye meydan veren ve öğrenmeyi yeniden yönlendirip kişiselleştiren bir öğrenme kültürünün yaratılması gerekmektedir.

21) Footnote 133: Bilgi, önemli ölçüde arttığından bu bilgiyi doğrusal ve dayatıcı bir biçimde iletmekte kullandığımız yapılar (okullar) ve belirlenmiş stratejiler artık iş başında sürekli öğrenmenin gerektiğinin bilincinde olan bilgi temelli kurumlar tarafından sürekli olarak sarsılmaktadır.

22) Footnote 134: Teknolojideki hızlı gelişmeler öğrenme ortamlarında hızlı bir değişime ve çeşitliliğe yol açmaktadır. Artık, öğrenme ortamı sadece okul

binaları ve sınıflar ile sınırlı değildir. Bilgisayar teknolojisine bağlı çoklu ortamlar ve iletişim teknolojisindeki gelişmelere bağlı bilgi ağları birer elektronik öğrenme ortamı oluşturmaktadır. Bireysel öğrenme ortamındaki çeşitliliğin artması öğrencilerin bireysel farklılıklarının önemini de gün gittikçe arttırmaktadır.

23) Footnote 135: Öğrenciler, kendi öğrenmelerinin sorumluluğunu almalı, sınıf düzeyi arttıkça artan sorumluluklarının farkına varmalıdır. Bilimsel ve teknolojik kavram dağarcıklarını geliştiren, soru soran ve sorgulayan, kendi problemlerini kuran ve çözen, tartışan, sınıf dışındaki öğrenme fırsatlarını da değerlendiren kişi olması istenmektedir. Ayrıca, kendisi ve çevresi için güvenlik konularında bilinçli davranmalı ve grup çalışması becerilerini geliştirmelidir.

24) Footnote 136: Kendini tanır ve bireysel özelliklerinin farkındadır; Bireysel gelişim için isteklidir; Kendini gerçekleştirir; İş birliğine ve grup çalışmasýna isteklidir; Öğrenmeyi öğrenir; Düşünme becerilerini geliþtirir; Akademik becerileri yaşam becerilerine dönüştürür; Etkili iletişim becerisine sahiptir; Teknolojiyi etkin kullanýr; Zamanını ve enerjisini verimli kullanır.

25) Footnote 137: (Öğrenci) Fiziksel özelliklerini tanıtır; neleri kolayca yapabildiğine ve neleri yapmaktan hoşlandığına karar verir; Duygularını fark ederek kendini tanır ve ifade eder; arkadaşları ile benzer ve farklı yönlerine karar verir.

26) Footnote 139: Fen ve teknoloji okuryazarı bireyler, bilgiye ulaşmada ve kullanmada, problemleri çözmede, fen ve teknoloji ile ilgili sorunlar hakkında olası riskleri, yararları ve eldeki seçenekleri dikkate alarak karar vermede ve yeni bilgi üretmede daha etkin bireylerdir.

27) Footnote 141: Hayat içerisinde değişimin kaçınılmaz olması nedeniyle olumlu yönde değişim için bilinçlenmeyi ön planda tutar. Öğrencilere değişim ve değişim sırasında ortaya çıkabilecek engellerden etkilenmeme ve oluşumlardan yararlanma, değişime adapte olma, risk yönetimi konularında beceri kazanmaları, gerektiğinde risk almaları konusunda rehberlik eder.

28) Footnote 142: Programlar, istikrarlı, üretken ve sürdürülebilir bir ekonomiyi önemser ve öğrencinin ekonomik hayat ile iç içe olmasını ister. Bu nedenle yalnız içinde yaşadığı toplumun ekonomik hayatını incelemesi ve bu konuda fikir üretmesiyle yetinmez, hızla değişen dünyada ortaya çıkabilecek ekonomik fırsatları değerlendirmesi için de rehberlik eder. Bu sayede öğrenci, gittikçe küreselleşen dünyada başarılı bir birey olarak, ilerideki çalışma hayatına girişimci bir ruhla ayak uydurmada zorlanmaz.

29) Footnote 143: Programlar, hayat boyu eğitimin vazgeçilmez bir gereklilik olduğunu, bunun da ancak okul çağında öğrenmeden zevk almaktan geçtiğini kabul eder; bu nedenle öğrencinin öğrenmeden ve öğrenmeyi öğrenmeden zevk alması için çeşitli önlemler alır.

30) Footnote 144: Çocuğun öğrenmeye heveslenmesi ancak araştırma arzusu ve doğal merakının uyarılmasıyla mümkündür.

31) Footnote 176: Öğrenciler kendi öğrenmelerinin sorumluluğunu almalı, sınıf düzeyi arttıkça artan sorumluluklarının farkına varmalıdır.

32) Footnote 177: Öğrencilerin kendi öğrenmelerinin sorumluluğunu alması beklenir.

33) Footnote 178: Kendini tanır ve bireysel özelliklerinin farkındadır; bireysel gelişim için isteklidir; kendini gerçekleştirir.

34) Footnote 180: Disiplin ve kurallara uymanın öğrencinin kendi yararı için olduğunu kabul eder, ve bu nedenle bu görevi öğrencilerin üstlenmesini bekler.

35) Footnote 181: Yaşamın farklı boyutlarındaki sorumluluklarının farkına varma ve sorumluluk üstlenmenin kişisel gelişimi açısından önemini açıklama; ödevlerini tamamlayarak kendi çalışmalarının sorumluluğunu üstlenme; davranışlarının sonuçlarını üstlenme; Daha iyi bir dünya için kendi yaş grubundakilerin de sorumlulukları olduğunu fark etme.

36) Footnote 182: Bireyin görev ve sorumluluklarını, kendi belirleyeceğinin bilincinde olma.

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