

## The Perception and Use Conditions of Teachers about the Activities in Teachers' Books in Terms of Curriculum

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**Abstract:** Student centred learning approaches define learning as an active process in which students configure new knowledge or ideas on their former ones. This is a process in which students search and find relationships between their present knowledge and subject contents. Learner centred approaches, by considering the individual differences, agree that every student should participate in the learning activities actively. In this context, it is important how teachers perceive and use the activities in teachers' books. It was determined that the participant teachers in the survey perceive, largely, the activities of the teachers' book as the standard structures that should be used and they use them faithfully.

**Key words:**

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### INTRODUCTION

It is largely believed that it is insufficient to use the traditional teacher centred education system for raising individuals to keep face with the changing world. The leading factor in this change is knowledge. Knowledge can be defined as the meaning in mind an individual produce as a result of his perceiving, processing, evaluating and judgement. In other words, knowledge is the meaning that an individual assign to the objects in mind as a result of his interaction with the objects, events or assets. Accordingly, an individual acquires knowledge by collecting the surrounding data with observations, experiences or reading, listening and monitoring and by assigning meaning these data (Saban, 2000; Plourde and Osman, 2003; Brooks and Brooks, 1999; Olsen, 1998; Caine and Caine, 1991).

Constructivist approach developed depending on this transformation of knowledge states that knowledge is constructed by students. Every student constructs knowledge individually and socially while learning. Learning is this interpretation and construction process (Özden, 2003; Yurdakul, 2005; Strommen and Lincoln 1992; Meyer, 1993). In this conditions in which repeating information is found insignificant constructivist approach enabling information to be transformed and restructured is becoming widespread at all the levels of education all over the world (Hutchinson, 1988; Smerdon, Burkam and Lee, 1999; Howard, *et al.* 2000, Lord, 1999).

In this process, Ministry of Education, after a pilot practice in 2004-2005 educational year, put new primary education programs based on constructivist approach in practice in 2005-2006 educational year Turkey. According to it the information formed in social interaction replaced with the information conveyed from teacher to students. The knowledge in this process is newly created one rather than the total amount of the information an individuals contributing interaction have.

For the reasons mentioned above it necessary to for teachers regulate learning environment based on the new program. Since constructivist classroom environment has different properties from traditional environment teachers have to leave the traditional roles while preparing learning environment. Teachers are expected to apply constructivist learning principles in learning environment (Brooks and Brooks, 1999; Olsen, 1998; Plourde and Osman, 2003; Yager, 1991, Bitner and Bitner, 2002). In constructivist classroom environment program is directed according to student problems, teachers regulate environment according to the students and interact them. Teachers have to guide for constructing learning on basic concepts, reveal students' point of view, adapt the programs according to students' prediction, accept students' autonomy and attempts and allow students to direct the lesson (Brooks and Brooks 1999; Howard *et al.* 2000). In this context, a constructivist teacher takes his every step with the students in learning environment. Constructivist learning environments are adjusted so that they can enable the students to lead rich learning experiences. With this way the students

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can acquire the facility to examine the accuracy of their previous knowledge, correct their misunderstandings and even totally give up their previous knowledge and replace them with the new ones. (Yaşar, 1998; Duffy and Cunningham, 1996; Haidar, and Abraham, 1991).

In this context, any planning that will be made with constructivist approach should be resiliently designed with students. In this planning it is important how students can learn not what teachers will teach. Teachers should prepare, correct and develop the plans with students by noticing that they be optional and flexible (Calderhead and Robson, 1991; Taggart and Wilson, 2005; Özpolat *et al.* 2007; Rakes *et al.* 1999). The directions related with the activities are prepared by teachers. Students make their choices from the ones given by the teacher, sometimes offer new choices and participate in the planning of the group activities (Duffy, *et al.* 1993; Lave, and Wenger, 1991; Brown, Collins, and Duguid, 1989; Schneider, *et al.* 2001).

Since the studies are very limited because of the new changes in educational programmes in Turkey it is very difficult to make a thorough comment on the programmes. However, there are some clues about how the programmes are applied and how they are perceived by stakeholders. In this study, how teachers perceive the educational activities in teachers' book was investigated.

**Method:**

In this study survey and qualitative analysis technique were used. Events are tried to be described with survey method (Karasar, 1995). In this study, it was tried to determine how teachers perceive and use the educational activities in their teachers' book within the new primary education programmes. The open ended questions were evaluated with qualitative analysis technique and the process was made with sequence of coding, theme, coding and organising the themes, commenting on the results (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005).

The sampling of the study was the 118 teachers working in Kütahya province and they were determined with the way of easily attainability during 2009-2010 academic years. In the survey, there are three personal questions, 32 survey questions and 2 open ended questions. Frequency (f) and percentage (%) analysis were made for the two open ended questions by using qualitative analysis technique.

**Results:**

The results related to this study which tried to determine how teachers perceive and use the educational activities in their teachers' book within teaching-learning process were given below.

**Table 1:** Distribution of the Teachers according to their branches

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. dev.
Variables	class	51	43,2	1,56	0,49
	branch	67	56,8		
	Total	118	100,0		

43,2% are class teachers and 56,8% are branch teachers of the 118 teachers participated in the study. .

**Table 2:** Distribution of the Teachers according to their length of service

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. dev.
Variables	0-5 year	12	10,2	3,01	1,42
	6-10 year	34	28,8		
	11-15 year	35	29,7		
	15-20 year	14	11,9		
	21 and over	23	19,5		
	Total	118	100,0		

Of the teachers participated in the study 10,2 % are 0-5 years, 28,8 % are 6-10 years, 29,7% are 11-15 years, 11,9% are 15-20 years, %19,5% 21 years and over in their length of service.

**Table 3:** The in service training situations of the teachers about the new primary education programme

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. dev.
Variables	Yes	68	57,6	1,42	0,49
	No	50	42,4		
	Total	118	100,0		

Of the teachers participated in the study, 57,6 of them got in service training about the new primary education programme.

**Table 4:** The differentiation situation of the teachers according to their branches

	BRANCH	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
I can easily apply the activities	class	51	3,0392	1,34106	,18779
	branch	67	2,1045	1,07498	,13133
Time is enough for the activities	class	51	3,2745	1,28185	,17949
	branch	67	2,6866	1,11748	,13652
Activities are feasible	class	51	2,6471	1,11038	,15548
	branch	67	1,9552	1,07918	,13184
Activities overlap with the acquisition	class	51	3,2549	1,11073	,15553
	branch	67	2,5373	1,11910	,13672

**Table 4:** Continue

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
I can easily apply the activities	Equal variances assumed	1,301	,256	4,202	116	,000**
	Equal variances not assumed			4,079	93,861	,000
Time is enough for the activities	Equal variances assumed	1,633	,204	2,656	116	,009**
	Equal variances not assumed			2,607	99,385	,011
Activities are feasible	Equal variances assumed	,241	,624	3,407	116	,001**
	Equal variances not assumed			3,394	106,169	,001
Activities overlap with the acquisition	Equal variances assumed	,623	,432	3,462	116	,001**
	Equal variances not assumed			3,465	108,188	,001

\*\* p <0,01

According to the results of the study, it was determined that those who can easily apply the activities, do not have problems in terms of time, find the activities feasible and overlap the activities with the acquisitions are the class teachers.

**Table 5:** The differentiation situation of the teachers according to their length of service

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
I reorganize the activities according to my class	0-5 years	12	3,5000	,52223	,15076
	6-10 years	34	2,5588	1,15971	,19889
	11-15 years	35	3,1429	,87927	,14862
	15-20 years	14	3,0000	1,30089	,34768
	Over 21 years	23	3,6522	1,33514	,27840
	Total	118	3,0932	1,14718	,10561
I can easily apply the activities	0-5 years	12	2,1667	1,26730	,36584
	6-10 years	34	2,0882	1,11104	,19054
	11-15 years	35	2,5429	1,06668	,18030
	15-20 years	14	2,2857	1,68379	,45001
	Over 21 years	23	3,3913	1,19617	,24942
	Total	118	2,5085	1,27933	,11777
Activities are very detailed	0-5 years	12	3,0833	1,31137	,37856
	6-10 years	34	2,2941	1,11544	,19130
	11-15 years	35	2,7429	1,09391	,18490
	15-20 years	14	3,7857	1,47693	,39473
	Over 21 years	23	3,3478	1,22877	,25622
	Total	118	2,8898	1,27958	,11780
Time is enough for the activities	0-5 years	12	2,5000	1,24316	,35887
	6-10 years	34	2,5882	,98835	,16950
	11-15 years	35	2,8000	1,18322	,20000
	15-20 years	14	2,7143	1,48989	,39819
	Over 21 years	23	4,0435	,76742	,16002
	Total	118	2,9407	1,22155	,11245

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
I reorganise the activities according to my class	3,451	4	113	,011
I can easily apply the activities	1,805	4	113	,133
Activities are very detailed	,604	4	113	,660
Time is enough for the activities	3,553	4	113	,009

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I reorganize the activities according to my class	Between Groups	19,089	4	4,772	3,998	,005**
	Within Groups	134,885	113	1,194		
	Total	153,975	117			
I can easily apply the activities	Between Groups	26,068	4	6,517	4,452	,002**
	Within Groups	165,423	113	1,464		
	Total	191,492	117			
Activities are very detailed	Between Groups	29,332	4	7,333	5,108	,001**
	Within Groups	162,236	113	1,436		
	Total	191,568	117			
Time is enough for the activities	Between Groups	35,936	4	8,984	7,322	,000**
	Within Groups	138,649	113	1,227		
	Total	174,585	117			

\*\* p<0,01

According to the results of the study, it was determined that those who reorganise the activities according to their students, can easily apply them and have enough time to apply them have 21 years and over length of service and the teachers who have 15-20 years length of service thought that the activities are very detailed.

**Table 6:** Adaptation of the present activities by teachers according to their classes

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. dev.
Yes	Yes	47	39,8	1,60	0,49
	No	71	60,2		
Total		118	100,0		

Only 39,8 %of the teachers adapt the activities in the teachers' books and 60,2% of them use the activities as they are.

**Table 7:** Activity planning situations of teachers by themselves

		Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. dev.
Variables	Yes	43	36,4	1,63	0,48
	No	75	63,6		
	Total	118	100,0		

Only 36,4 % of the teachers partly plan the activities themselves and 63,6 of them accept the planning of the activities as they are.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions:**

According to the results the class teachers stated that they could more easily apply the activities in teachers' book when compared to the branch teachers, had enough time to apply the activities, the activities were feasible and the activities overlapped with the acquisitions. Because class teachers are always in interaction with the students and so the abilities of the students in the process of education are more functional. According to the length of service, it was seen that the teachers who reorganize the activities according to their classes, can easily apply and don not have time problem have 21 years and over length of service and the teachers who think that the activities are too detailed have 15-20 years length of service. The fact that the teachers having 21 years and over length of service plan the activities according to their classes and apply easily may result from the fact that they have a wide experience and see the activities as a mean. The fact that the teachers who have 21 years and under length of service find the activities to detailed may indicate that they perceive these activities as standard structures that should definitely be applied

It was determined that 39,8% of the teacher adapt the activities in teachers' book according to their classes and 36,4% of them prepares the activities partly themselves. There was not a significant difference between the in service training of the teachers about the new primary education programme and the activities.

On the ground of the results of this research, constructivism bases on the idea that information can be better learned when it is actively restructured by the learner. According to the constructivist approach, all individuals should be activated in the learning process and they should be responsible for their own learning.

Thus, teachers should choose a wide range of methods and should allow more cooperation oriented learning with the activities appropriate to the levels of their classes.

In the light of these data, it can be said that teachers perceive the activities in their teachers' books as a must that should definitely be carried out and they are strictly dependent on the book while applying them in the class. But teachers should see the activities in their teachers' books that are presented as guides as an alternative tool that convey them to their goals. The philosophical and academic understanding on which the new teaching programme is based and what the function of the teachers' books is should be taught to the teachers in service training and before service.

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