THE EFFECT OF INTEGRATED CURRICULUM APPLIED AT HISTORICAL VENUES ON EMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

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This study was carried out to identify the effects of applying integrated curriculum in historical places on emotional products. For this purpose, the acquisitions, skills and personal characteristics (values) of primary school 3rd grade classes including Science of Life, Turkish, Mathematics, Visual Arts, Music and Physical Education were integrated under the theme of “Sagalassos”. The integrated curriculum was applied by using “creative drama” and “cooperative group study” as teaching methods in “Burdur Museum” and “the Ancient City of Sagalassos”. This study was carried out between the 24th of April and 25th of May 2010. Primary school 3rd grade students at the ages of 9-10 participated in this teaching process with their parents. The study was conducted with a total of 36 participants consisting of 18 parents and 18 students. 4 fathers, 13 mothers and 1 grandmother participated in the study as parents. The voluntary students who took part in the study from two different classes formed the group. The study was maintained with 3 academics and 1 archaeologist. In the studies started at Burdur Museum, an activity was conducted on a theme each week. The study started with “Communication” theme and then went respectively on “I know Sagalassos”, “Life in Sagalassos – Special Days”, “Art in Sagalassos-1” themes and ended with “Art in Sagalassos-2” theme. In the study where qualitative data of the study were collected from the video camera records of the process, the diaries kept by students and parents and the interviews which were carried out at the end of the study. According to the results of the content analyzes of interviews, video camera records and diaries, it was found out that the students and the parents participated in the study were happy and they found the activities useful. And, it can be said that the students and parents have gained skills such as self-management, planning and production, having fun, emotion management, responsibility, participation, sharing, cooperation and teamwork at the end of the integrated program.

Keywords: integrated curriculum, cooperative learning, education at historical place, abilities and personal characteristics, creative drama
The basic objective of education is to develop various high-level skills and emotional characteristics of students rather than to equip students fully and solemnly with information and knowledge in this day and time where learning process is no longer confined to school buildings and classrooms.

To this end, primary school curricula have been changed in our country since 2005. The new education approach having emerged in line with the changes in curricula has been grounded on the meaningful learning of students. It is therefore stressed that learning environments should not be restricted to classrooms but be extended to each of every section and venue of the society.

While a subject used to be handled within a discipline in the disciplinary teaching approach which had been adopted as the common practice in traditional Turkish education system for a long time, interdisciplinary approach has started to replace it in primary school curricula since 2005 (Yıldırım, 1996). This approach provides teaching the classes in a holistic and supplementary manner instead of having them in an independent and isolated way. In the newly-applied curricula, it is illustrated how to connect the classes with one another, and it is underlined that programs need to be applied according to the constructivist approach.

The emphasis has shifted from the product towards the process in these new curricula grounded on the thematic approach. In so doing, the abstract education approach dominated by grades and scores has been replaced by concrete experiences and learning by doing (Onur, 1999).

The reason why the integrated (thematic) teaching program is more appreciable today even though it is not a brand-new approach is not a need for a mere novelty but the findings achieved through studies and researches in field of education (Demir, 2008).

Neurophysiologic findings of the recent studies on human brain have shown that the brain has some specific functions such as receiving, analyzing, comparing with the previous ones, giving meaning and reorganize the relevant reaction towards the stimulant and storing it to revisit in the future. It is essential to create teaching & learning environments which are suitable for the brain structure of the individual, rich in stimulants, enabling students to learn directly by doing in a holistic manner with insights (Senemoğlu, 2007:260-261).

Organic bonds have been established between the acquisitions in a learning field and the acquisitions in different learning fields within the class in this program, by which several acquisitions can be handled as a whole and students can learn the information and skills and etc. meaningfully in a holistic manner. The goal of these programs covers development of not only the cognitive learning but also emotional learning, and these emotional features are considered as personal characteristics. In personal qualities, education of values is taken as basis to attach importance to education of character for students. The programs also contain activities to enable students to acquire and develop various skills.

In these curricula based on students’ learning by their own experiences in their own life settings, learning environments have extended out classrooms and school buildings and integrated into the real life. Arrangements have therefore been made to help students learn in their real life places, situations and occasions. Ministry of National Education (2008, 2009 and 2010) has introduced a practice called “Education in Museum” within the curricula of Turkish Language, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies and Science of Life classes for the 1st to 8th grades in primary schools since
It was also expressed that the curriculum covered not only the museums but also all other venues including all natural and cultural assets. For example, museums include Anatolian Civilizations Museum and Topkapı Palace Museum etc. while natural and cultural assets include Hierapolis and National Park of Küre Mountains, Çatalhöyük and Safranbolu Settlements, and the Trojan Archeological City.

What is meant by “visiting and examining museums and natural and cultural assets and conducting activities in these places” as expressed in description of some acquisitions in the curriculum is to carry out transfer of knowledge between museums and natural and cultural assets and education content. In doing so:

- It will be possible to use these venues as a versatile and effective learning environment in teaching & learning activities throughout the education process.
- It will be possible to use the objects in museums and natural and cultural assets as a means for students to understand and perceive history, archeology and culture as a part of life.
- It will be possible to discover some skills and talents which are otherwise hard to be discovered in classroom environments.
- It will be possible for students to enjoy some opportunities provided by encountering with real life objects.

Class teachers and branch teachers (Turkish language, mathematics, science and technology, social sciences etc.) need to coordinate with and among each other in order to create permanent and meaningful learning, to manage time efficiently and to enjoy the venue (museums and natural and cultural assets) in the most productive manner.

Museums and historical venues function as effective environments providing more freedom for students than the learning environments designed by teachers do, helping students learn with real life objects in a real life environments, and making learning an attractive and enjoyable activity. Museums are therefore one of the most convenient environments in which life-long education can be rendered to anyone at any age (Onur, 2000).

People go to museums or historical venues to spend time or to go into social interaction with other people, to do something worth-doing, to have new experiences, to have an opportunity to learn, to be in active participation and to feel good in a peaceful environment and so on (Oruç & Bilgin, 2008:127-128).

Erbay (2008:443-449) expresses in his study titled “the Objectives of Using Creative Drama in Museums” that the drama method is widely used in various museum groups in the USA.

It is fairly obvious that museums or historical venues can provide some qualities which are very difficult to reach in classrooms. Schools primarily provide cognitive comprehension for children whereas museums create an environment enhancing the insight. Teachers talk in the class mainly about the facts which are difficult for students to understand, which students find boring. However, in museums, children can see, touch, smell, handle and use tools. The more the learning is addressing the senses of the learner, the more lasting the learning becomes, which learning in museum brings us (Hooper-Greenhill, 1996). Montessori argued that the environment should be designed in a way to help children and lead them to learn some simple tasks by repetition by discovering their environment by themselves.

This study was conducted in order to determine the influence of students’ acquisition of skills and personal values belonging to the primary school 3rd grade classes including science of life, Turkish language, mathematics,
visual arts, music and physical education in *Museum of Burdur* and the ancient city of *Sagalassos* on emotional characteristics of children.

Acquisitions, skills and personal qualities under the classes to be processed were integrated under the main theme of *Sagalassos*. The integration of acquisitions under the curricula was carried out by using the *Webbed Model*. In the Webbed Model, an efficient theme is placed on the center and processed along with relevant themes of other classes. For example, the functioning of machines can be selected as theme in *Work & Technics* Class and integrated with the theme of historical events of the era in which inventions were made in *Social Sciences* class, and drawing or designing the same machines in *Drawing & Painting* class (Senemoğlu, 2004; Fogarty, 1991).

The question of the study was defined as “What is the effect of applying integrated curricula in historical venues by means of creative drama techniques on emotional products?” The answers of the following questions have been sought in line with the question above.

1. What are the opinions of students concerning the process of working?
2. What are the opinions of parents as to how these works affect emotional characteristics of students?
3. What are the results of observations concerning the works?

**Method**

**Design of the Study**

In this study, which used a quasi-experimental method, quantitative data were collected with sociometry used as the pre- and post-tests whereas qualitative data were collected through interviews, observations and diary records. Despite the fact that the study used qualitative and quantitative research methods collectively, this paper focuses on only the qualitative part.

**Sample Group**

The sample group of the study was composed of 18 students from two different classes in Bahçelievler Primary School in city center of Burdur Province and their parents including 13 mothers, 4 fathers and 1 grandmother on voluntary basis.

**Data Collection Devices**

Part of the study data were collected through a semi-structured interview form. Other data were obtained through video camera records and the diaries kept by students during the course of the study.

In the interviews conducted as individual and focus group meetings, the researcher tried to minimize the partiality which may be caused by the interviewer by asking the same questions to each of every individual. Using a semi-structured interview minimized the effect of biases of the interviewer on the process and facilitated classification, organization and interpretation of the data obtained in the interviews. In these interviews, it was aimed to discover attitudes, emotions, experiences and the reactions of participants which are otherwise hardly possible to discover.
Data Analysis

Encoding of the data collected through both the interviews with students and their parents and observations of teaching & learning process was conducted in four steps of finding the themes, encoding the data, organization and definition of data according to the themes and finally interpretation of data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2004).

In this study, qualitative data were analyzed descriptively. In line with the purpose of the study, views of students and parents on emotional characteristics were also examined in observation records.

In analyzing the data, the original format of the data obtained from observation and interviews were respected as much as possible. Statements of the participating students and parents were quoted verbatim in findings and comments sections. The qualitative data obtained in the study were organized and interpreted collectively.

Processes

The study started on the 24th of April 2010 in Burdur Museum, and continued in the ancient city of SAGALASSOS on the 1st of May, 8th of May, 15th of May, and 22nd of May 2010. The study was planned under the main theme of Sagalassos with five sub-themes as “communication”, “I know Sagalassos”, “Life in Sagalassos – Special Days”, “Art in Sagalassos 1” and “Art in Sagalassos 2”. The 1st sub-theme of the study in which a sub-theme was handled each week was conducted in Burdur Museum whereas other sub-themes were performed in the ancient city of Sagalassos. The five-week long study was planned in five different creative drama workshops which were carried out between 09:00 and 15:00 hours every Saturday.

In planning the creative drama process, consideration was given to preparation (warm-up), animation and evaluation steps. The warm-up step mainly consisted of child games. The aim of these games which children and their parents played together was to develop some basic skills including communication, sharing, getting to know each other better, establishment of a group dynamic and cooperation. After this step, groups were encouraged to make animations by using some techniques such as improvisation, role-playing and pretending.

The sub-themes and main activities which were performed through creative drama and group examination as a cooperation-based learning technique under the main theme of Sagalassos every week are as follows:

**Theme 1: Communication (April 24, 2010), Burdur Museum:**

- a. Preparation (warm-up) - games
  - Introduction games
  - Establishment of group dynamic
  - Skills such as communication, cooperation and sharing
- b. Observation of museum (along with parents)
- c. Improvisation about the museum with improvisation cards
- d. Making daily evaluation and writing the diary

**Theme 2: “I know Sagalassos” (May 1st, 2010), Ancient City of Sagalassos:**

- a. Preparation (warm-up) - games
- b. Defining the rules for the historical venue trips
- c. Observation of Sagalassos as accompanied by the Archeologist of the Museum
- d. Improvisation about Sagalassos
- e. Making daily evaluation and writing the diary
Theme 3: Life in Sagalassos – Special Days (May 8th, 2010), Ancient City of Sagalassos:
  a. Preparation (warm-up) – games
  b. Planning a performance concerning Sagalassos for the Museums Week
  c. Preparations for the performance (rehearsal for the animation of entrance of Alexander the Great into Sagalassos after the war and the festivities after the entrance)
    - Animation of the Dining Scene
    - Playing local music
    - Eulogiums for war heroes (concerning emotional characteristics)
  d. Making daily evaluation and writing the diary

Theme 4: Art in Sagalassos 1 (May 15th, 2010), Ancient City of Sagalassos:
  a. Preparation (warm-up) – games
  b. Children making handcrafts and figurines out of play dough as a gift for their mothers on the occasion of mothers’ day
  c. Parents making posters concerning Sagalassos
  d. Children and parents collectively working with clay to make sculptures
  e. The final rehearsal about the animation
  f. Making daily evaluation and writing the diary

Theme 5: Art in Sagalassos 2 (May 22nd, 2010), Ancient City of Sagalassos:
  a. Preparation – Students and parents taking their places on the performance scene
  b. Performance of the “Post-war festivity” for the audience who came to Sagalassos for museums week
  c. Evaluations about the performance
  d. Presentation of certificate of participation to students and parents
  e. General evaluation

Through the themes and activities outlined above, acquisition of the following emotional characteristics and skills was targeted:

- Research skills
- Self management (learning how to learn) skills
- Communication
- Development of environmental awareness and efficient use of the environmental resources
- Planning and production
- Entertainment
- Emotion Management
- Responsibility
- Accurate perception of time and space
- Participation, sharing, cooperation and team work
- Patriotism
- Preservation and development of cultural assets
- Helpfulness
- Collectivism
Findings

In this study, all the data obtained from interviews, observations and diaries of students were handled collectively. Views of parents including mothers, fathers and a grandmother obtained from interviews and diaries have been summarized as follows:

“It was a nice activity. Our kid was complaining that we did not care about her. She volunteered to participate in the activity but I was reluctant. However, I started to come here voluntarily after the first week.”

“We had fun in this activity. If you had not made this activity in these places, we could not have seen these places. Along with our child, we lived our childhood here once again.”

“I live in this city for 9 years but I had never been to Sagalassos. Here, we had fun along with our children, and we made paintings and sculptures with them. It was a lot of fun and very much informative.”

“My child was closed to communication, sharing and cooperation. She was not leaving me for any moment. However, now she socialized with her friends, which made me happy so much. She has started to research what she has to pay attention when observing historical works. We became friends with not only parents of her class-mates but also parents of other children in other classes.”

“My child was very shy and she would not go out during the break-times. However, she now goes out for break-times and plays games like hide-and-seek with her friends, which is a great accomplishment and improvement for us. She even started to take responsibility at home.”

“Our kids have learnt many things here by experiencing them. Therefore, they have seen the learning environments other than classrooms. Our child started to behave more carefully, like he is more polite than ever!”

“We had never seen such an activity before and that’s why we had some difficulty at the beginning. They used their hand-skills when they worked with clay, and they observed the figures in historical works. I think my child improved his imagination. All these works, sharing and communication were so nice.”

“Our children and we learned by making team-work.”

“I have seen that my daughter has a different personality in her circle of friends, which surprised me. It was so nice that she shared things with her friends.

“My child is happier, and he comes here fondly. He likes the environment here very much.”

“Our children learned many things about many issues such as preservation of our history and the rules of historical places. Maybe the best part of such activities is that we, the parents, played games, had fun, made paintings and sculptures, shared things and cooperated with one another just as our children did.”

“We learned about such places and I have seen that my child improved his self-confidence. We also learn along with him.”

“I am the assistant principle in my son’s school and I also made observations at school. I also talked to the teachers of our children. They told me that students who participated into this study were happier, and they got more socialized and were able to express themselves better after these activities.

“In most of the time, my wife would look after our child. It made me very happy to take care of him. It was very nice to share something, to talk to and to do something with him.”

“We had the chance to see how our children communicated with other children and parents. I could observe how my child behaved when he was with his friends.”

“I started this with a prejudice and thought that we would quit it after a couple of weeks. However, then we ourselves started to learn things, too.”
“... We have observed that our children could think freely and design very good questions.”
“... I have observed that he is gifted about the beats and he can sing lyrics in line with the beats.
“... She lived a whole week with the excitement about this day. She got up by herself this morning.
“... I have always loved such places since I was a little kid, but my grandchild did not have any interest in such places. Because his parents had jobs to do, I replaced them to come here along with my grandchild. He got very happy. He got more socialized as he shared things and worked together with his friends.”
“... As a person who works in a museum, I learned a lot of things from this work. This study has been a very good example as to how education should be in museums and historical venues. Moreover, I have seen that it would be more productive if we play games along with children when they visit a museum.”

Here is the summary of views of the participating students on the process:
“... I have seen the act of sharing in this activity. It did not use to visit historical venues before, but after the activities, I have raised interest in it. It was very exciting and pleasing to me.
“... Today, I have seen that it is good to share things. We worked together, which was also nice. I learned a lot of things about historical works. I felt myself very good.”
“... I got excited when I came here. I have learnt to share things and figured out that I can do everything by myself.”
“... At the beginning, I got excited and frightened. But when I came here and played games with others, I got accustomed to here. I have learnt what happened and who lived in Sagalassos, and played very nice games.”
“... We played very enjoyable games here in the museum. I leaned many historical things when I came to Sagalassos.
“... I met here people who were in my school but whom I did not know. I got very happy.
“... It was very nice for me to make a present for my mum out of play dough.”
“... I was nice to make figures out of dough, to make our own music and to sing here.
“... We made many group works today, which made me so happy.”
“... We learned how museums are visited and how historical works are observed.”

Here is the summary of results of video-camera observations conducted throughout the study. This study brought together students studying in two different classrooms and their parents. It was observed that students and parents enjoyed learning together and they fondly participated in teamwork, took responsibility, shared duties, developed an environmental awareness, had fun, improved their awareness on cultural assets, and effectively used their communication skills.

Conclusion

As a conclusion of the study, students and parents were positively affected in realms of communication, entertainment, emotion management, patriotism, responsibility, collectivism, helpfulness, preservation and development of cultural assets, self-management skills and emotional characteristics.

In order to develop emotional skills in children, settings should be created outside classrooms where students and parents can work collectively. It is recommended to use active learning methods such as creative drama in
studies to this end. This process can be further applied to different grade levels and different students for extended time periods.

References


