



## The First Life Studies Curriculum in the History of the Turkish Republic and the Influence of John Dewey

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### ABSTRACT

In accordance with the interests of the country, in an integrated manner with the civilized world, existing institutions and practices have been modernized in the Republican era, in addition to laying the foundations of the institutions and practices in modern Turkey. Important revisions have also been made in the field of education while these foundations were being laid. One of these revisions was the abolition of the 1924 curriculum, which was previously prepared quickly, and was considered not to fully meet the needs of the country, as well as the replacement of the 1926 curriculum. This revision has undoubtedly brought about important changes with it. One of these changes is that a Life Studies course was included in the curriculum for the first time, as a separate pivotal course within the framework of John Dewey's collective teaching approach. The purpose of this study was to examine the first Life Studies curriculum of the Turkish Republic in terms of goals, content, objectives, skills, values and attitudes. In this study, designed in the qualitative research design, the historical research method was preferred. The data of the study were gathered using document analysis and literature review. The findings obtained were considered to be a tool that would serve the purpose of the research and be analyzed through the descriptive analysis method. According to the results of the research, it was found that the Life Studies course is included in the curriculum as a pivotal course in the first three grades of primary education with an interdisciplinary approach. The content of the curriculum includes numerous objectives, such as learning by doing, field trips, decision-making, communicating, learning rules and preparing the child for life as an entrepreneur.

### KEYWORDS

Life Studies; 1926 primary education curriculum; Turkey; objectives; values; John Dewey.

## INTRODUCTION

New needs emerged and a process of change and modernization took place accordingly during the establishment process of the Republic of Turkey. One of the areas where this change has been experienced was education. The first of the changes undergone in the field of education, while the national struggle was continuing, was the establishment of the Ministry of Education on 3 May, 1920 (Akyüz, 2012). The second was the holding of the Education Congress in Ankara in 1921, where solutions were sought for the educational problems facing the country. For this purpose, curricula were prepared for primary and secondary education institutions, study periods were organized, and teacher training activities were conducted, especially for villages (Cicioğlu, 1985). The regulations on education continued after the proclamation of the Republic, and one of the most important was the Law on Unification of Education to ensure unity and solidarity in education. Minority schools, which were considered to be an important problem in education, were put under the authority of the Ministry of Education by this law. Therefore, the provision of supervision was facilitated, and both secularism and unity in education were ensured (Ergün, 1982).

While trying to eliminate the problems in education, the leaders of the Turkish Republic also wanted to build an education system suitable for the contemporary and modern world. For this purpose, the 1924 curriculum was prepared and put into effect as a matter of urgency (Kaya, 2022). The curriculum was published under the title of 'Curriculum of Primary Schools'. However, this curriculum did not last long and was abolished two years later. The reason for this was that it was prepared quickly due to the conditions of the period and could not fully meet the needs of the new regime (Maarif Vekâleti, 1924; Kaya, 2021). A new curriculum was therefore prepared and put into effect in accordance with the needs, goals and objectives of the Republican regime. The objectives of this 1926 Curriculum, prepared with the help of foreign experts, were stated as follows:

The main purpose of the primary school is to raise good citizens by actively adapting the younger generation to their surroundings. In order to fulfill this purpose properly, it was deemed necessary to amend the existing primary curriculum. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 5)

According to the 1926 Curriculum, primary education was planned to be five years and two semesters. Accordingly, the first three years were considered as the first semester, and the fourth and fifth grades were considered as the second semester. The most important feature of the curriculum was the 'transition to the collective teaching model'. The Life Studies course was chosen as the most important pillar of the collective teaching approach. Therefore, the courses in the first three years were combined under the title of Life Studies course. These courses were Nature Study, Musâhabât-ı Ahlakiyye ve Malumat-ı Vataniye [Civics], History and Geography, Agriculture, Public Health, Calculus and Language. The Calculus and Language courses were planned to be given within the Life Studies course as content, even if separate names were given to those courses (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926).

Arslan (2000) gathered the innovations in education under three headings with the 1926 Primary School Curriculum, so it was accepted that students' personal interests should be considered, and that vocational training should be given importance. Not only the curriculum of the courses was specified, but the purpose of each course and the method to be applied in its teaching were also outlined. The view of teaching the courses, based on the environmental conditions and creating a wide range of opportunities, was also included in this curriculum. The founding cadres of the Republic aimed at creating a new society in accordance with their ideology, especially through education (Kaya, 2020). Because of this, there were many developments in the field of education in the early periods of the Republic. One of these developments was to invite foreign educators and experts to the country to assist in order to renew the Turkish educational system by adapting it to the requirements of the era (Akyüz, 2012). At the forefront of these experts is the American educator John Dewey, who left an important mark on the educational system of the Republican era. John Dewey's understanding of education was based on pragmatism, that is, that education should produce beneficial results. He also stated that, contrary to the traditional understanding of education, learning by experience would be more effective. According to Dewey, who advocates an education model based on collective teaching and a vocational training approach, a school should raise a child as an entrepreneur and the curricula should be prepared accordingly. John Dewey argued that schools were institutions that transform society. Schools therefore play a crucial role in raising individuals in the desired way. This assumption has been accepted in Turkey, as well as in other countries, because, like most new regimes, the Republic of Turkey also wanted to raise individuals who adopted and assimilated the official ideology of the newly-established state (Binbaşıoğlu, 1982). Dewey assigned an extremely strong mission to schools in this regard, because 'schools will both raise talented citizens and purify them from negativities' (Dewey, 1933).

John Dewey, who came to Turkey on July 19, 1924, first visited the Darülfünun [University], a number of high schools, and certain teacher prep-schools in Istanbul. He attended a teachers' union meeting in Ankara and had the opportunity to listen to the problems related to teachers during his stay in Turkey (Ülken, 1992). He prepared two reports after his visit to Turkey and presented them to the authorities; the first is the one he prepared while he was in Turkey, which included the issues he stated as being urgent. In this report, he mostly addressed economic problems in education. His main report was the second one he prepared, and it was sent after he returned to America (Ata, 2001). He stated in his report, which was more comprehensive than the first, that the aims of schools should be determined. While determining these goals, he defined that it was necessary to accept school as the center of social life, and to make it a part of the independent, modern and civilized world convenient for social development (Dewey, 1933).

He specified in this report that unity in education should be ensured within the Ministry of National Education, and that uniformity and centralization should be avoided while doing

this. He emphasized provision of flexibility in the curricula according to the structure of the regions (Dewey, 1933); that is, the curricula should be prepared considering the needs of the different regions. A considerable part of the report was devoted to teacher training. For him, new schools should be opened, and teachers should be trained in order to open these schools (Öztürk, 1996). In addition, he listed a number of suggestions, such as eliminating the problems of teachers, opening an experience school for new teachers, improving salaries and housing for teachers, and the avoidance of unnecessary and troublesome assignments and relocations (Dewey, 1933). He also pointed out a need for establishment of schools to prepare village teachers. By considering the needs of the villagers and farmers, he asserted that providing teacher training would facilitate the development of the region. In fact, these suggestions of Dewey had an impact on the establishment of village institutes designed to train teachers (Dewey, 1933).

Dewey could not get much realistic information about schools, because the schools were closed during the summer break when he came to İstanbul. However, he had the opportunity to visit certain schools and to get an impression from the physical condition of the schools, the laboratories and the materials used, and he stated that they should be improved (Ata, 2001). He also emphasized the importance of sending teachers abroad for one year, if possible, and opening summer courses and gaining experience in these courses. Dewey went to Ankara after İstanbul and had a number of visits and meetings there. He gained impressions regarding schools during his visit to Ankara and, as a result of these impressions, he stated that the textbooks there should not be removed, and that it would be appropriate to use the books when necessary. He also stated that the teacher has a vital role in education, and that it is a necessity to be trained with the latest teaching methods (Öztürk, 1996).

According to Dewey's understanding of education, it was an important issue to prepare students for life by raising them as entrepreneurs. When he returned to İstanbul from Ankara, he drew attention to the following points in an interview he gave to a newspaper:

He considered it necessary for primary school students to have handicrafts and village life activities rather than preparation for the professions due to their age, for schools to have adequate equipment and playgrounds for education, and for teachers to go abroad. He made a number of suggestions on these issues (Ata, 2001). He also declared that schools should be operated under a central authority, but that regional differences should be considered. He further expressed, in particular, that the needs of village children and city children are different and these should be taken into consideration in education (Cicioğlu, 1985).

Making entrepreneurship and creative thinking essential in children was key for him. He said that the issue of democracy in education has an important place, and that this should be instilled in the child by the teacher. Teaching should be practical and responsive to local needs (Dewey, 1933).

### **John Dewey's Philosophy of Education**

Dewey viewed education as a social phenomenon, and school should be a social setting. According to him, the school as a small society is also a place where democracy is taught and preserved. In fact, school is crucial because it is the process of preparing an individual for society. The school should not be an artificial learning environment, but rather a place where students learn by doing and living. Therefore, it should be student-centered and prepare students for real-life situations. Dewey's educational philosophy was pragmatism. According to him, the school should be viewed from this perspective, that is, as a place providing benefits. The concepts of democracy and school are inextricably linked in his philosophy. According to him, school is an institution that is accessible to all people regardless of religion, language, or skin color, and it is an essential component of democracy because, in a democracy, differences are regarded as a source of wealth and should be managed in accordance with the principles of equality. Dewey believed that society can be directed or experienced haphazardly by rules or punishments, but the main thing for him was to direct society through education. Through the school, society can formulate its own goals and organize its own means and resources, achieving the desired outcome (Dewey, 1916).

The 1926 curriculum is significant because it covers six fundamental principles on which today's educational programs are based. The basic principles mentioned (MEB, 1997) are as follows: The collective education system; primary school goals; lesson objectives; methods to be used in teaching; the analysis method used in the teaching of primary literacy; and the division of primary school with five classes into first and second periods.

The 1926 curriculum was revolutionary in terms of content, method and principle. The Life Studies Course was used as the foundation for inclusive education, and it included concepts such as education, school, and work. The main purpose here was to raise the next generation of citizens who would actively participate in their society. In short, the curriculum defined a good citizen as good in terms of his or her contribution to society (Tarman, 2011).

The first primary education curriculum prepared under the influence of John Dewey is the 1926 curriculum. Life Studies, the principles of collective teaching and vocational schooling, fundamentally constitute the basis of this curriculum (Akyüz, 2012). The purpose of this research is to examine the Life Studies curriculum, which emerged under the influence of John Dewey, in terms of goals, contents, objectives, values and skills.

### **Research Question**

- What is the content of the Republic of Turkey's first life studies curriculum and what is the impact of John Dewey on this program?

### **Research Sub-questions**

- What was the rationale for the curriculum?
- What was the philosophy of the curriculum?

- What was the structure of the curriculum, weekly lesson schedule (theme-season comparison)?
- What were the topics (curriculum items)?
- What kind of knowledge were students expected to gain with the knowledge and concept dimension of the curriculum?
- What kinds of skills did students want to gain with the skill dimension of the curriculum?
- Which values, attitudes and habits were aimed to be given to students with the affective dimension of the curriculum?
- Was John Dewey's understanding of education reflected in the curriculum?

### **Importance of the Research**

The main purpose of the Turkish educational system is to educate individuals equipped with both national and universal contemporary values. These values come from the national and spiritual resources of society. The main purpose of educational programs is to bring them to individuals at an early age. In this respect, the Life Studies course has emerged with a mission that exactly reflects this function. The Life Studies course, for the first time, took place in the Turkish educational system as a separate course with the 1926 curriculum in the Republic of Turkey. Here, the American educator John Dewey's model of collective teaching and student learning with an interdisciplinary perspective was quite evident. Issues such as what the content of this first curriculum was, for what reasons it was prepared, what kind of innovations it brought to education, as well as what values and skills it wanted to bring to students, are extremely important and constitute the main topic of the current research. In this regard, John Dewey's visit to Turkey, the man who made important contributions to the preparation of the 1926 curriculum, and the emergence of the Life Studies course are discussed. Although there are valuable studies in the national literature, there is no specific research that directly addresses the content of the curriculum mentioned. This is the most significant feature of the research that makes it different from existing studies on the matter. Consequently, John Dewey's understanding of education, his contribution to the Turkish educational system, the emergence of the Life Studies course, and its content analysis, are discussed in this study.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

As one of the qualitative types of research designs, the historical research method was employed in this study (Büyükoztürk et al., 2016). Historical research is a study aimed at revealing a past phenomenon and event as clearly, plainly and accurately as possible. This method allows the examination of combinations of social factors that cause social change by leading to a certain result, and creating a theory by reaching general conceptualizations (Kaptan, 1991). The data of this study, which uses the historical research method, were collected using the document analysis technique. Document analysis is a technique in which all kinds of written

materials containing information about the subject being studied are examined and analyzed. These documents can include various forms, such as diaries, letters, and official documents of states (Balci, 2006; Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2016).

Document analysis has advantages in terms of quality, low cost, sample size, long-term analysis, lack of reactivity, individuality and originality (Balci, 2006; Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2016). The data of this study were obtained from the Ferit Ragıp Tuncor Archive and Documentation Library of the Ministry of National Education, and the determined data were first transcribed from Ottoman Turkish into modern Turkish, and then checked by experts who read Ottoman Turkish. Once the translations were checked, their content was analyzed.

## FINDINGS

This section includes the findings and remarks on the rationale, elements, course schedule, objectives, and skills of the Life Studies curriculum and the influence of John Dewey.

### Findings and Remarks on the Rationale for the Curriculum

Significant changes have been made under the heading of ideas, which are the basis for the organization of the new curriculum. These changes were indicated in the introduction part of the curriculum.

One of the reasons for the creation of the curriculum was that the primary education curriculum, which had previously been a five-year program, was divided into two periods as 3+2, and citizenship education was began to be taught in the first three years under the name of Life Studies course. This change is stated in the curriculum as follows:

The educational duration of the primary schools, which was reduced to five years with the 1924 amendment, was divided into two periods in the new curriculum. The first three years are the first period; the last two years are the second period. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 4)

The second reason for the creation of the curriculum was interdisciplinary teaching. It was emphasized that there was a disconnection between the courses in the previous curricula, therefore a connection was established between the courses with the new curriculum and a collective teaching model was adopted. This rationale was expressed in the curriculum as follows:

In the previous curricula, the lessons in all classes were shown separately, completely independent from each other, and not much attention was paid to the connections and relations between them. Yet, a great deal of importance has been given to the relations among the knowledge in the new curriculum. Especially in the first period, teaching all the lessons around the life and society (core) and as 'collectively' has been accepted as a principle. Therefore, although 'Nature Study', 'Conversations', 'History' and 'Geography' courses were shown separately in the previous curricula, they were combined under the name of 'Life Studies' in the new curriculum of the first period. This course was supposed

to be the backbone of the whole teaching and other courses would always depend on it. Although separate hours were allocated for the Language, Calculus and the Handicrafts-Art classes, this was mostly done in order to show the order to be followed gradually in the teaching of those classes. For instance, the Calculus class would progress within this gradual order. However, while the technical aspect of the lesson follows this order, the connection with 'Life Studies' would always be maintained in terms of preparation, practice and application. The Language class is similar as well. Although Alphabet and Reading classes progress within the usual pedagogical order, Oral Language practices, Conversation and Essay classes would always be related to Life Studies'. 'Course matrix' showing the relationship between the classes was added to the new curriculum of the first period. This chart is suitable for the purpose to be clearly understood at first glance. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 5-9)

Another important rationale of the creation of the curriculum was that the courses were not well classified and were not connected to each other. It was thought that it would be more appropriate to teach the courses in a way that complements each other in the new curriculum. The reasoning of this situation was stated in the curriculum as follows:

The teaching of the courses in a way that presents the origin of various sciences, more or less classified, was considered to be beneficial only in the second period. However, the need for these courses to be taught in parallel with each other and to reinforce each other has not been overlooked. In order to ensure that children gain knowledge by using the skill rather than scattered information, importance was given to the teaching of the lessons in a way that is compatible with life and environment as much as possible. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 3)

Another important rationale of the curriculum emerged with a thought parallel to John Dewey's view that education should increase entrepreneurship in children and prepare the child for business life. According to the curriculum, the education should provide the children with skills for future work-life and should gain the knowledge of the profession to be able to have a job when they finish the school. This was justified as follows:

In the previous curricula, the 'business principles' and the personal efforts and activity of the student were not given as much attention as necessary. In the new curriculum, these points were given special importance. The principles of teaching all the lessons in a way that will encourage the students to make 'personal efforts', and taking the 'personal interests' of the students as the starting point as much as possible in education, have been accepted. A special value has been attributed to the Handicrafts-Arts courses as an important discipline that will develop the hand skills of the students, give them the power to express their imaginations materially, and in particular, revive the other lessons. That the student learns the lessons in person, as much as possible, and by engaging in mental activity, was the most obvious feature of the new curriculum. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 9-11)



Another important rationale specified that the goal of each lesson was stated separately, which would be a good roadmap for teachers. Organizing Life Studies and Citizenship courses around local conditions, which is an important argument for social life, was emphasized as well, because, it has been foreseen that it would be more appropriate for the child to learn about his/her environment through the strategy of learning 'from near to far' and 'from the environment to the center'. These ideas are expressed in this curriculum as follows:

It was not limited to mentioning only the content of the courses in the new curriculum; the objectives of each lesson and the outlines of the directions to be taken in the education were also shown. In this way, the teachers who read the curriculum will easily follow the direction of the education to be preferred. Another important feature of the new curriculum was that it leaves a wide opportunity to teach the subjects (especially the Life Studies and Citizenship courses) according to the local conditions. In the new curriculum, a great deal of importance has been attached to always considering the local conditions, the natural and social environment in education, and to choose the point of action from the nearest environment of the child as much as possible. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 12)

#### **Findings and remarks on the philosophy of the curriculum**

The curriculum combined Nature Study, Agriculture, Health, Geography, History (Introduction to Geography and History) and Moral Conversation courses under the title of Life Studies course in the first three grades by linking these courses with each other. In this respect, an educational philosophy that would prepare the child for life with a collective teaching model is envisaged in the curriculum. This philosophy was expressed in the curriculum as follows:

Since the Nature Study, Agriculture and Public Health, Geography and History, and Ethics courses in the previous curricula are related to each other in many aspects, these were combined in a complementary course under the title of 'Life Studies' in the first three grades of the primary school, and the curriculum was arranged accordingly. The Life Studies course has a close relationship with the 'Oral Practices' in the Language course. In the first three grades, a close relationship needs to be observed between the subjects of various courses, and the Life Studies course must form the center of the education. Nature Studies, Goods Lessons, Citizenship, History and Geography courses will be taught separately in the fourth and fifth grades, with care being taken to preserve the connections and relations between the courses. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 7-8)

The educational philosophy of the Life Studies course could be expressed as the child getting to know his/her environment, learning the work done in his/her own surroundings, and preparing the child for business life according to the locality, which was in line with John Dewey's philosophy of education. The 1926 curriculum was in fact prepared in line with the reports of John Dewey. In this respect, it was quite usual that his philosophy would overlap. The objectives of this educational philosophy were stated in the curriculum as follows:

1- To introduce the most known stones, mines, plants and animals that are encountered in the geographical environment lived in, to examine and explain the natural events occurring around, to show the living conditions of living creatures, and the effects they have on one another.

2- To show, on the one hand, the effects of the natural environment on animals and human beings through water, air, soil and, on the other hand, the changes that man has brought on nature by raising animals, growing forests, cultivating the soil, constructing roads and opening channels.

3- To examine the work and activities of the people in the social environment to which the child belongs. To teach the family, township, municipality and government concisely.

4- To give information to children about the human body and the duties of the organs in the body, by means of examination based on observation. Accordingly, to teach the rules of public health in a practical way and, in particular, to get children accustomed to cleanliness in every respect.

5- To provide children with moral beliefs by discussing real cases that occur in school life between family or people in the city or by narrating imaginary tales and stories.

6- To prepare children for Geography by examining the descriptions and lands of the village or town where the school is located and its surroundings, and to make a preparation for History by giving information about famous buildings and monuments found in the same surrounding area.

7- To let children have the pleasure and enthusiasm of processing and working by leading them to do 'activities' by having them personally make paintings, handicrafts and earthworks and collections, as well as observations and experiences, related to the Life Studies course.

8- On the one hand, to increase children's examination and observation skills, and on the other hand, to get them accustomed to the appropriate and beautiful expression of what they see and know in oral and written form through that work. In accordance with their beliefs, particular attention shall be paid to the development of children's 'expression and commentary' skills in the Life Studies lessons.

9- To develop and strengthen the feelings of cooperation and solidarity among students through group works. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 6)

The Life Studies course has been accepted as a basic course, and has been structured in a way that includes different disciplines with the philosophy of the curriculum. The Life Studies course was, in other words, designed as the basis for mathematics, arts, handicraft, music and physical education courses, which stated in the curriculum as the following:

Language, Calculus, Handicraft-Arts, Music, and Gymnastics lessons shall be closely related to Life Studies. However, the point of start did not necessarily have to be Life Studies course in the teaching of the subjects listed in the Life Studies curriculum. Sometimes, even courses such as Calculus, Language, Handicrafts, and Arts can be a point

of start for one of the topics or an external subject. In particular, it would be appropriate to make an event or issue that children have a common interest in, as a starting point. It was left to the teacher's communication and intelligence to benefit from such spontaneous interests of children. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 12)

It was stated in the philosophy of the curriculum that it would be better to conduct the lessons by experiencing and seeing. The aim was to associate the events experienced in the conditions of the day with the lesson, and therefore, to make the learning more persistent. This idea was expressed in the curriculum in the following way:

It is necessary to examine each incident as soon as it occurs. The point of start in teaching should be made when those events, such as the appearances of a solar eclipse, comet, lightning flash, rain, snow and hail, and flood, occur. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 11)

One important philosophy of the course was to be able to give flexibility based on the regions. While preparing the curriculum, it was stated that it would be appropriate to make changes considering the climate and geographical conditions of the regions. Here, the aim was that children can get to know the regions they live in better, and it can also be said that the 'from periphery to center learning model' was utilized. In this aspect, education has been localized. These aspects were expressed in the curriculum as follows:

The conditions of the natural environment all over the country, and the lifestyles and livelihoods of the people living in that region are not the same. For example, children living in the Erzurum Plateau, Adana Plain or Marmara coast are faced with very different natural landscapes, climate conditions and economic activities. Some modifications should therefore be made in the topics of the Life Studies course, depending on whether the school is located in a village or town, in a mountainous place or on a plain, on the beach or in the interior. Adhering to the original, the primary education inspectors and teachers of a district or locality should come together to determine the necessary amendments to be made in the curriculum according to local requirements and conditions. For instance, a special importance should be given to cotton farming in Adana, sericulture in Bursa, tobacco farming in Samsun and growing figs and grapes in Izmir. Likewise, in malaria regions, the causes of this disease, the fight against the disease and the remedies for its treatment should be properly taught to children. Educational curriculum proposed for amendment according to local conditions are sent to the Ministry of Education, Department of Education and Discipline and are implemented only after they are approved there. (A separate instruction will be made for this matter). (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 7)

It is finally understood from this that the aim was to take the children outside in suitable weather conditions to learn about the environment and nature, to make trips and observations, to gain the love of nature, to engage in practice of agricultural education, and to get to know their environment and people well.

Because it is necessary to teach the Life Studies course based on observations, the teacher should take the student to the courtyard and garden in suitable weather: they should make observations in the fields, fruit, vegetable and flower gardens; and children should be involved in gardening as much as possible. Each student should grow at least a few flowers in pots in places where a garden is not available. In short, the teacher should instill a love of nature in the student by making use of the most appropriate opportunities and activities. Apart from this, the teacher should show the student the market place of the town, the shopping life in the market, the shops of blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers and tailors, and the factories, mills and so on around the school. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 11)

### Findings and remarks on the structure of the curriculum and the weekly course schedule

The structure of the Life Studies curriculum, findings, and remarks on its weekly course schedule, are given in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** *The 1926 curriculum and weekly course schedule of the Life Studies course*

Subjects	First Period			Second Period	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade
T Alphabet	12	-	-	-	-
U Reading	-	4	4	2	2
R Spelling	-	3	2	1	1
K Composition	-	2	2	2	2
I Grammar	-	-	-	1	1
S Writing	-	3	2	1	1
H					
Religion	-	-	1	1	1
Life Studies	4	4	4	-	-
Calculus- Geometry	2	2	3	3	3
History	-	-	-	2	2
Geography	-	-	-	2	2
Nature	-	-	-	2	2
Goods	-	-	-	-	2
Citizenship	-	-	-	2	2
Art-Handcrafts	4	4	4	3	3
Music	2	2	2	2	1
Gymnastics	2	2	2	2	1
(Home Administration) (Sewing)	-	-	-	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>

Home Administration classes are reserved only for girls' schools. For this class, one hour will be taken from the fourth grade Physical Education, in addition to allocating the fifth grade Spelling class to this class. 'Sewing' for girls will be taught in the Fourth and fifth grades, and one hour that will be taken from each of the Arts and Handicraft classes will be allocated to the Sewing class. The Calculus-Geometry and Painting-Handicraft lesson times were combined. The teacher may use these times for any of the combined classes, depending on the teaching requirement. Field trips or discussion meetings are held in both boys' and girls' schools on Monday afternoons. Classes are suspended on Thursday afternoons.

### Findings and remarks on the elements of the Life Studies curriculum

Course units of the Life Studies course by grade levels are given in Table 2. There were seven units in the first grade, five units in the second grade, and four units in the third grade.

**Table 2.** *Units of the Life Studies course by grade levels*

1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade
Our School	Autumn	Autumn
Our Home and Family	Republic Day	Republic Day
Autumn	Winter	Winter
Republic Day	Spring	Spring
Winter	Summer	
Spring		
Summer		

The content of the Life Studies curriculum according to the First Grade level is given in Table 3. There were seven teaching units based on Table 3. The objectives to be given to students through these units are as follows:

- The *Our School* unit; the child participates in classroom activities, recognizes the course tools and materials in the classroom, learns to adapt to the rules at school, gets to know the school and its surroundings, and develops the habit of cleaning. Through the *Our Home and Family* unit; the child gets to know about the house and its surroundings, comprehends the importance of family life, knows family members, and learns to obey the house rules and the safety rules at home.
- The *Autumn* unit; the child recognizes seasonal events in autumn, learns seasonal changes in plants, recognizes animals according to the season, learns agricultural planting in autumn, and observes the winter preparation of the family. Through the *Republic Day* unit; the child understands the importance of Republic Day and participates in school activities during this holiday.
- The *Winter* unit; the child observes the change of the weather, comprehends seasonal events, observes the animals in his immediate environment, learns to help the needy in winter, understands the importance of school cleaning in winter, and learns to dress according to the season.

- The *Spring* unit; the child observes the change of weather in the spring season, grasps the length of days, learns about spring fruits and vegetables, learns to care for plants, learns to sell fruits and vegetables, learns the varieties of plants, observes animals coming out in winter, learns about the 23 April holiday (23 April National Sovereignty and Children's Day) and helps to decorate the school for 23 April.
- The *Summer* unit; the child observes seasonal plants and animals.

The content of the Life Studies curriculum according to the Second-Grade level is given in Table 4. There were five teaching units based on Table 4. The objectives to be given to students through the teaching of these units are as follows:

- The *Autumn* unit: the child introduces him/herself with his/her different physical features; observes the construction of a new house; tells directions by observing the Sun; visits craftsmen working on house construction; observes life in nature; observes the change of weather in autumn; observes autumn fruits; learns about preparations for winter; and learns to protect nature.
- The *Republic Day* unit: the child understands the importance of Republic Day and participates in school activities on this holiday.
- The *Winter* unit: the child learns about the heating of the house and school; grains; winter games; protecting his body; having a healthy life, and explaining the necessity of cleanliness for a healthy life; comprehends the importance of water; and learns the country and the regions/he lives in.
- The *Spring* unit: the child learns about animal reproduction; observes the greening of plants; learns about streams and lakes; observes animals living in streams and lakes; and learns about bird species.
- The *Summer* unit: the child learns about summer fruits; observes the growing of field crops; and observes the lengthening of the days and the change of the weather.

The content of the Life Studies curriculum according to the Third-Grade level is given in Table 5. There were four teaching units based on Table 5. The objectives to be taught to the students through these units are as follows:

- The *Autumn* unit: The child comprehends the importance of school and school cleaning; learns about the area where the school is located, the people of the vicinity, lines of work, governmental organization, regional administrators, means of communications, non-governmental organizations, and working for the benefit of society; comprehends the importance of body cleaning; learns about infectious diseases and prevention of them; and learns the rules of good manners.
- The *Republic Day* unit: The child understands the importance of Republic Day; participates in school activities on this holiday; and learns about previous government forms, the new government and its administrators.

- The *Winter* unit: The child observes the movements of the sun; learns to measure the weather temperature; natural events; protecting bodily health; saving and economics; winter games; socializing during long nights; home lighting; means of heating; records natural events; learns the concept of time; and growing various plants at school.
- The *Spring* unit: The child learns about and celebrates 23 April holiday; helps to decorate the school for 23 April; learns about Parliament and history since the period of Abdülhamit II; Turkish scientists; participates in spring excursions and develops observational skills; observes natural events at night; opens exhibitions in the classroom; studies the region lived in on a map; and comprehends the importance of the environment and nature.

**Table 3.** *Life Studies Curriculum Objectives in the First Grade*

Unit	Objectives
<b>Our School</b>	<p>Making the seating arrangement of each student in the classroom and having them sit at their desks in the class. Measuring children's height and their weight.</p> <p>The student's greeting the teacher and the students greeting each other; having the students say their names; having the students say their fathers' names.</p> <p>Greeting: To greet the teacher when coming to and leaving the school and to greet the teacher in the street.</p> <p>Our classroom; doors, windows, walls, ceiling, flooring.</p> <p>The furniture of our classroom; desks, lectern, blackboard, chairs, tables, paper basket, flower pot, and so on.</p> <p>Student's school items; bags, books, pencils, and so on. The most appropriate use and the keeping of these items.</p> <p>School building; doors, corridors, classrooms, teacher's lounge, cafeteria, conference hall, and so on (according to the division of the school).</p> <p>Courtyard and garden of the school; playground, fountain, flower garden, restroom, and so on (according to the division of the plot).</p> <p>Orientation of the student to school system: When we come to school; when we go home; how we enter the classroom; where and when we play in the school; where and when we study.</p> <p>Time at school: The time we arrive in the morning; the time at noon; the time we go to bed at night; the time it is at midnight; weekdays.</p> <p>Keeping our body and clothes clean; hands, face, neck, ears, hair, nails and feet.</p> <p>Cleaning in the school: Not entering the classroom with muddy shoes; not creating dust in the classroom; not throwing pieces of paper on the ground; not damaging the school furniture; keeping the restrooms clean; keeping the taps clean.</p>
<b>Our Home and Family</b>	<p>The location of our homes: The division of the house; dining room, kitchen, living room, bedroom (to be taught according to the locality); the courtyard and garden of our house; the things in our house.</p> <p>Preservation of our home: avoiding the danger of fire.</p> <p>The roads we pass on our way home: How we should walk on the roads; the dangers on the roads (especially the danger of cars in big cities) and avoiding them.</p> <p>Our family: Our father, mother, siblings, relatives, and our mother's housework; our jobs, our ages, our fathers' ages, and our siblings' ages.</p> <p>Cleaning in our house: Jobs of our fathers and mothers; crafts and professions (according to the locality).</p>



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<b>Autumn</b>	<p>How the weather is in summer: Cooling of the weather in autumn; rain; fog; wind (according to the change of weather).</p> <p>Trees and flowers in autumn; Falling of tree leaves (after observing a few trees, such as apple and pear trees).</p> <p>Animals in autumn: Swallows, storks and other birds fly away; helpers in the villagers; oxen, cows, and horses.</p> <p>People's work in autumn (depending on the locality): The farmer's transporting of his crops to his barn; harvesting of crops (grapes, walnuts, potatoes, acorns, and so on, depending on the environment); ploughing and planting seeds by the farmer.</p> <p>Winter preparations in the family: Making tarhana [traditional Turkish soup], bulgur [cracked wheat], noodles, various pickles, jams, and supplying coal and wood.</p> <p>Shopping: Money, okka [an Ottoman measure of mass], and cubit.</p> <p>Children's games in autumn: spinning tops, hoops, and so on.</p>
<b>Republic Day</b>	<p>Decoration of the classroom with children on the occasion of Republic Day: the flag; decorations; festival; decorations from flowers and branches and paper chains.</p>
<b>Winter</b>	<p>Winter is coming: The weather is changing and days are getting shorter; first signs; dew, frost, cold, winds, clouds, rain, and snow.</p> <p>Preparation for winter in school: How the stove in our classroom is set up; wood, coal, and the brazier stove.</p> <p>How animals live in winter; Animals in our homes; dogs, cats, and mice; animals in the countryside; birds and mercy to birds.</p> <p>People working outdoors in winter (depending on the locality): Boatmen, sailors, workers, police, and watchmen; the comfort we gain from their work; people helping each other.</p> <p>The poor and winter: Poor children especially, shoemakers, and others; forms of aid and assistance to the poor.</p> <p>Cleaning in schools in winter: Mud on the streets; keeping the school free from mud; and cleaning our clothes.</p> <p>Children's winter fun: sledding, and making a snowman; the tales we listened to on winter nights (giants and fairy tales will be avoided, and their ideas about such fairy tales they listen to at home will be corrected.)</p> <p>Our Bodies: Conversations about the external parts of the body; how we should protect our bodies in winter; clothes and clothes cleaning; colds and their treatment.</p> <p>Keeping our bodies clean: Washing our faces, hands, and feet; cutting our nails; combing our hair; brushing our teeth; and not spitting on the ground; using a handkerchief; cleaning our noses; and protection from lice and nits.</p>

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**Spring** Days getting longer: Warmer weather; the melting of snow; rising of streams and rivers; work done in schools in Spring; removal of stoves; and the cleaning of houses.

Spring in the orchard (depending on the environment): Blossoming and leafing of almond, peach, plum, apricot, apple, pear, cherry and sour cherry trees; cleaning the trees of caterpillars; work of the gardener in spring; opening of tree roots; pruning of branches; planting seeds such as barley, beans and chickpeas in the garden and pot.

Spring in the vegetable garden (depending on the environment): Broad beans, zucchini, lettuce, cucumber; vegetables being beneficial to children; the work of the gardener in the vegetable garden; growing seedlings; planting new vegetables; harvesting vegetables and selling them at the market and in shops.

Spring in the flower garden: Depending on their locality, introducing flowers such as roses, carnations, tulips, wallflowers, daffodils and violets to children; having children plant flowers in pots or in the garden, and have the flowers watered in the following days.

Spring in the countryside: The greening of the meadows (after a field trip to the countryside); the springtime of the fields; the flowers growing in the countryside; crocuses, violets, and others.

Animals in spring: The awakening and emergence of animals sleeping in winter; sheep, lambs, goats, shepherd, cattle, shearing of sheep; fleece, silk; weaving and knitting.

23 April (the first gathering of the Grand National Assembly), and Spring Festival: Gathering spring flowers to decorate the school and classrooms; decorating classrooms with branches, flowers and paper chains.

Birds: Hens, chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks; the return of storks and swallows, their nesting, and hatching; protection of birds; not touching bird nests.

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**Summer** Summer fruits: such as plums, apples, pears; picking them.

Vegetables: such as peppers, tomatoes, beans, and peas.

In the creek: Ducks, geese, fish, water frogs, and others; the fishery.

In the fields: The crop spikes, the poppy flower, and the harvest of the crops.

Sailing on the sea or lakes (if available around): The purpose of ships and steamboats.

Classroom work exhibition.

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**Table 4.** *Life Studies Curriculum Objectives in the Second Grade*

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
<b>Autumn</b>	<p>Our new classroom: Review of the school system; measurement and recording of children’s height.</p> <p>Our house and its parts: A visit to observe the construction of a new house; building the new house; what they build the new house with; how it is built.</p> <p>Carpenter’s shop: Making doors, windows and furniture for the new house; tools used by the carpenter; types of tools.</p> <p>Blacksmith’s shop: Tools used by the blacksmith (observed in a bricks and tile workshop if available nearby); why and how are bricks and tiles are made.</p> <p>Where people lived in the past; tents and huts of gypsies and nomads; pergolas; and huts in vineyards and gardens.</p> <p>Autumn: Birds flying away; change of weather; comparison of autumn with summer.</p> <p>Autumn in the vineyards: Vintage; what we produce from grapes (according to the environment).</p> <p>Autumn in orchards: picking plums, apples, pears and other fruits.</p> <p>Autumn in the vegetable garden; peppers, cabbage, leeks, potatoes, and others.</p> <p>Autumn in the flower garden: Winter preservation of flowers, dew, hoarfrost; how we prepare our winter grains; cabbage, peppers, pickled tomatoes, molasses, cheese, and others.</p> <p>Domestic animals: Cows, oxen, water oxen, donkeys, horses, mules, and camels</p> <p>The sky: The rising of the sun; its daily path and setting; day and night; the moon and stars; clear and cloudy weather, rain, snow, and so on.</p> <p>The year and its parts: Four seasons; months, weeks, the calendar, finding days from the calendar; clocks; finding out what time it is; the value of time; doing everything on time.</p>
<b>Republic Day</b>	<p>Holiday preparations of our class: The Republic Era; past ages.</p> <p>Our dress: winter and summer clothes; peasant and urban attire; the way people dressed in the past, and how they dress now; inspection of fabric samples, examination of simple fabric materials and making a collection out of them; cleaning clothes.</p> <p>Our shoes; Our summer and winter shoes, boots, shoes, sandals, rawhide sandals, slippers, clogs, and pattens; the making of our shoes; why and how are they made; making a collection from leather and rubber samples; foot and footwear care.</p> <p>Visiting the market place: Where and on what days the market is set up; items sold in the market; order in the market; police officers, guards, municipal officers, gendarme, and others; their duties; governmental and municipal organization in our area.</p>

<b>Winter</b>	<p>How we heat our homes and schools: Braziers, tandoors, stoves, iron stoves, tile stoves, central heating (if available); How people heated their dwellings in the past.</p> <p>How we light our homes: candles, kerosene lamps, electricity and gas (if available); the lighting of the past; the lighting of the town.</p> <p>Bread: What bread is made of; farmers; wheat, rye, corn; the mill; furnaces; making a collection from cereals and flour samples.</p> <p>Winter fun: sledding; ice skating (depending on the environment); falling over; getting injured; getting cold; and treatment.</p> <p>How we protect ourselves: Protection from infectious diseases; avoiding lice; cleaning the body; washing, and changing clothes; compliance with cleanliness at the table; not spitting on the floor; ventilating rooms in the classroom and at home; disease transmission; flies, lice, bed bugs, fleas, mosquitoes, and their destruction.</p> <p>Transport vehicles: cars, phaetons, automobiles, trams, ferryboats and airplanes; how they are made; the means of transport people used in the past?</p> <p>Drinking water: Where we get our drinking water; springs, streams, wells, lakes, and fountains, and so on; water containers; cleaning; diseases transmitted by water; what source of water did people drink from in the past?</p> <p>Our homeland: the city, district, town or village where we were born; our neighborhood; the houses, shops, market place, and so on, in our neighborhood.</p>
<b>Spring</b>	<p>Spring is coming: calving of sheep, lambs and kid goats; Spring flowers blooming in the garden and in the countryside; the budding of trees in the orchard; the leafing of trees; working in the vegetable garden and planting seedlings.</p> <p>Stream or lake: If there is a stream or lake around the village or city, the children are taken there; animals such as ducks, geese, fish, frogs and turtles that live in streams and lakes;</p> <p>working in the vineyards in spring (depending on the environment);</p> <p>plants sown in Spring (according to local conditions); tobacco, poppies, beet, and so on; planting experiences in the garden of the school; songbirds; nightingales, goldfinches, finches, greenfinches, skylarks, and others.</p>
<b>Summer</b>	<p>Fruits: peaches, cherries, sour cherries, plums, apples, pears, and others; 23 April and Spring holidays; children's summer preparation in the classroom; Spring games and entertainment; spinning tops and hoops, jumping rope, and kites; country trips; swings.</p> <p>In the fields: Wheat, rye, barley; their spikes and yellowing; sickle season;</p> <p>days getting longer and warmer in summer; rain, hail, lightning, and streaks of lightning.</p> <p>Revision.</p> <p>Classroom exhibition.</p>

**Table 5.** *Life Studies Curriculum Objectives in the Third Grade*

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
<b>Autumn</b>	<p>Our new classroom: The work of our classroom (Children’s heights and weights will be measured, and recorded); organization within our classroom in order to make our classroom clean, sanitary and orderly; selecting groups of cleanliness, health, orderliness, neatness, and sharing of these duties;</p> <p>review of life and school regulations within our school; relationships between the younger class student and the older student.</p> <p>A detailed examination of the village or town where the school is located: The main work of the people in the locality; Ziraat Bank and other banks, cooperatives (if any), and comparison of these with each other; the situation of unemployed people; the results of unemployment.</p> <p>Governmental organization: Major governmental departments and government officials: Director, district governor, governor, judge, mayor and municipal board, and their duties (visiting the court and observing a case or two).</p> <p>Post office and telegraph: How the mail system works; the relation of the place to its surroundings; major roads and means of transportation (visiting the post office).</p> <p>Charity and aid organizations: Hilal-ı Ahmer [Red Crescent], hospitals, Himaye-i Etfal [Child Protection Agency]; assistance from such an organization; the duties of people for the continuation of the service of such an organization.</p> <p>Conditions and actions that everyone should do or not do in school and outside for the comfort and peace of the general public.</p> <p>Our Bodies: The external parts of our body; our dress, our shoes; detailed examination of the materials from which our clothes and shoes are made, and making collections from samples; body cleaning, protecting body health and clothing hygiene.</p> <p>Our internal organs: Nutrition; the main ingredients that make up our food; bread, milk, eggs, vegetables, fruits, meat, sweets and drinking water; nutritional hygiene.</p> <p>Air and respiration: The importance of our lungs, country air, fresh air; the dangers of polluted air.</p> <p>Major diseases: Malaria, tuberculosis, swamps, mosquitoes, fight against mosquitoes, flies, dust and filth within the school; remedies to avoid tuberculosis; germs causing diseases; protection from germs; the harm of alcohol; alcohol leading to tuberculosis and other diseases.</p> <p>Healthy habits: While standing and sitting; breathing, eating and drinking (not drinking cold water when sweaty); walking, running and playing; taking care of teeth and feet; reading and writing.</p>
<b>Republic Day</b>	<p>Holiday preparation of the class: The Republic; the Turkish nation; the Turkish homeland.</p> <p>Turkish nation’s struggle for independence: Former governments and the evils of the sultans; our new government and administration; our President.</p>
<b>Winter</b>	<p>Winter preparations: Winter preparation in our classroom and school;</p> <p>observing the change of days and weather; recording the temperature of each day by looking at the thermometer in the classroom.</p> <p>Rain: The cause of rain; evaporation and condensation of water; the benefit of rain; conducting experiments on evaporation and condensation of water.</p>

Wind and storms: The temperature outside the classroom; the temperature inside the classroom; air entering through an open window; air flow; the effect of weather conditions on health.

While snowing: Snowfall; snow and blizzards in calm weather and windy weather; blizzards; study of snow on a black cloth; temperature of snow and ice; snow melting; frozen water cracking jugs; observations and investigations in this regard; the temperature of boiling water; benefits of snow.

Body temperature of a person: The relationship between this temperature and health; measuring the temperature of the body by testing it with a medical thermometer; fever diseases; measles, scarlet fever, smallpox, typhoid, typhus, and how to avoid them.

Increase of winter costs: The need for more food, more clothes, and the need to heat homes; the need for savings and economy; situation of the poor; helping the poor; charities and their services; charitable organization within the school.

Condition of animals in winter: Birds; helping birds and other useful animals.

Winter fun: Sledding and ice slides; making something out of snow, like a snowman.

Longer winter nights: Life during long nights; gatherings at home; folk tales and plays; riddles; suggesting imaginary persons, such as giants in fairy tales, and suchlike, do not exist in reality; fighting superstitions and fears.

The lighting of houses: Lighting in the past; kindling, candles, and oil lamps. Lighting today: Petroleum, air gas, electricity, lighting and eye protection. Matches: Making a collection of materials used for lighting.

Means of heating: Fire furnace, braziers, stoves, gas stoves, central heating, wood, charcoal, hard coal, gas, coal gas, and electricity (making a collection of fuel samples); heating and protection.

Towards Spring: Continuing to observe the weather and the days and recording the changes in a special notebook; observing and recording the length of the day by making a simple sundial; recording the weather by observing morning and evening; measuring the temperature; recording the direction and strength of the wind as 'light', 'strong', 'very strong' or 'storm'; recording cloudy and rainy days; keeping a simple weather observation chart for the class.

Allocating places for small agricultural experiences in the school garden and planting flower, vegetable and grain seeds there. Recording by counting the seeds of vegetables and grains planted; the number of seeds recorded will be compared with the number of crops to be obtained later on. The students will keep an observation book and record the date they planted the seeds, the number of seeds planted, the results of the observations they made from time to time about their growth and finally, the number of crops obtained. If there is no suitable place for the experience of planting in the school yard, these experiments will be conducted with plants planted in flower pots or wooden boxes.

Establishing a small 'aquarium', where the lives of frogs and local fish are observed in the school. A large glass jar can be used as a simple aquarium.

Silkworms will be raised in places where climate is suitable, and the life stages of the silkworms will be observed.

Harmful and useful animals and insects: Protecting the useful creatures while avoiding the harmful ones. Protecting lizards especially, because they are beneficial animals, and correcting superstitions about them. The lizard feeds on insects harmful to agriculture and is a non-poisonous, harmless animal.

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**Spring** The 23 April Holiday and Spring Week: Supplying flowers and greenery for the holiday; decorating the classroom with spring flowers; the significance and importance of the 23 April Holiday; the Grand National Assembly in the government organization of Turkey; reviewing the struggle for independence and narration of the most important cases in history from the last days of Abdülhamid II to the present (provided that the intellectual level of the children is considered); previous and current Turkish elders; Turkish scholars; Turkish administrators and soldiers. Spring excursions and rural excursions: School trips to the east, north, west, and south of the village or city should be experienced; contemplating the general landscape of the city by going to a high point with a view of the whole village or city; discussing ideas about directions; observing the movement of the sun in the sky; samples of flowers, insects and stones will be collected on the tours. Observing the night sky: The constellations of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor; the pole star and other stars; the movement and phases of the moon. Drawing a plan of the classroom and the school with the surrounding streets for the purpose of preparing a classroom exhibition. Teaching the idea of scale. Examining the layout of the village or city where the school is located. If such a layout exists, the teacher uses this one first. On this layout, certain places are found and shown; the distances between them are estimated and compared; the idea of scale is reinforced; the main buildings are shown in pencil on the layout. Drawing a rough layout of a village or town; this layout will be a simple version of the real layout, and will only include a few of the most important streets and notable buildings. This layout will be drawn after the excursions made with the students in the village or city, and the students' observations will be used while it is drawn. The other villages and towns of the district of the city or village lived in: The roads between them; discussions and reflections on natural landforms. Studying the natural landforms of the city's surroundings: the hills and streams; the effects of water on stones and soil; high hills, mountains, large rivers and streams, seas and lakes, and life around there. The effect of the surrounding landforms on the life of the locality: Streams and waterfalls in the vicinity; using them as motion energy; transmission of diseases from swamps; suggestions about drying them up. Benefit of forests: Protecting trees; planting trees in the school garden or in a reserved area that is easy to get to, and taking care of the trees planted there. Review of important topics. Classroom exhibition: The display of a year's work in the classroom.

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### Findings and remarks on the skills of the curriculum

The skills included in the Life Studies Curriculum are shown in Table 6 below.

**Table 6.** *Skills in the Life Studies curriculum*

Research	Getting to know yourself and the surroundings
Perceiving change	Personal care
Protecting health	Obedying rules
Conserving nature	Perception of space
Entrepreneurship	Recognizing national values
Observation	Time management
Decision-making	Economic consciousness
Use of resources	Preparing for the professions
Observing natural events	Perceiving seasonal change
Learning the seasons	Communication

### Findings and remarks on the affective dimension of the curriculum

The curriculum aimed at instilling a number of national and universal values in children. It is aimed that the child develops a lot of positive behavior, starting from his/her behavior in the classroom and in the family, to health knowledge, environmental knowledge, nature and love of animals. Particular attention was given to Republic Day in the curriculum. In order to make students understand the importance of the Republic, the Republic Day unit is included at all grade levels across the curriculum. In addition, it was desired that the benefits of the Republic be taught to students by comparing the old forms of government with the Republic. Another important aspect of the affective dimension of the curriculum was that it also focused on family life. For instance, the curriculum addressed family unity, the child's role in the family, and parent-child relationships. The curriculum was eventually organized in such a way that its content would prepare children for professional life, based on John Dewey's philosophy.

### Findings and remarks on the influence of John Dewey on the Life Studies Curriculum

One of the central tenets of John Dewey's educational philosophy was that school serves as a means of socialization for students. This philosophy is reflected in the program in the following ways:

The students' meeting with the teacher and with one another; having the students say their names, as well as the names of their fathers. Greeting: To greet the teacher when entering and leaving the school, in addition to greeting the teacher in the street; Review of life and school regulations within our school. Furthermore, the emphasis on 'relationships between younger and older students' demonstrates that the curriculum attempted to ensure the child's socialization through recognition and getting to know others. (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 7)



Dewey described the school as a place where democracy is taught, and these issues were reflected in the program as follows:

Decoration of the classroom with children for Republic Day, festival, flag, navy, and decoration with flowers, branches, and paper chains; Comparison of the current republican era and the previous old era; Conditions and actions that everyone should or should not do, in and out of school, for the comfort and peace of the general public. Orientation of the student to the school system: When do we come to the school? When do we go home? How do we enter the classroom? Where and when do we play in school? Where and when do we study? (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 5-14)

These expressions demonstrate that the curriculum attempted to teach students about the importance of the Republic, as well as the rules that should be followed both inside and outside of school.

The curriculum was designed, based on the philosophy of John Dewey, with such content that it would help children prepare for the professions, because, according to Dewey, the curriculum should raise children as entrepreneurs. The curriculum should then be based on pragmatism. It was especially underlined that preparing the curriculum structure by considering the human resource needs of the regions would be beneficial. These issues were reflected in the curriculum. It was particularly emphasized that children should learn about agriculture and agricultural activities. These issues were expressed in the curriculum as follows:

Preparing places for small agricultural experiences in the school garden and planting some flower, vegetable and cereal seeds there. Recording the number of vegetable seeds and grain seeds planted (the number of seeds recorded will then be compared to the number of crops to be obtained). By keeping a class observation book, the students will record the date they planted the seeds, the amount of seeds sown, the results of the observations they made from time to time about their growth, and finally the number of crops obtained. If there is no suitable place for planting experiences in the school yard, these experiments will be conducted with plants planted in flower pots or wooden boxes. Spring in the orchard (depending on the locality): blossoming and leafing of almond, peach, plum, apricot, apple, pear, cherry, and sour cherry trees, and cleaning of trees of caterpillars. Gardener's work in the spring: cleaning tree roots, and pruning branches; planting seeds such as barley, beans and chickpeas in the garden or in pots.

Spring in the vegetable garden (depending on the locality): broad beans, zucchini, lettuce, and cucumber as vegetables are beneficial to children. Gardener's work in the vegetable garden; growing seedlings, planting new vegetables, harvesting vegetables and selling them in markets and shops.

The farmer ploughing and planting seeds. The farmer carrying his crops to his warehouse. The harvesting of crops (grapes, walnuts, potatoes, acorn, and so on, depending on the locality). Our house and its parts: a visit to observe the construction of a new house. Who builds new houses? What do they build new houses with? How do they build them?

Carpenter's shop: making doors, windows and furniture for the new house. Tools used by the carpenter: types of tools. The blacksmith's shop: tools used by the blacksmith (observed in a bricks and tile workshop if available nearby). Why and how are bricks and tiles made? (İlk Mekteplerin Müfredat Programı, 1926, p. 14-19).

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Life Studies was included as a separate course with the launch of the 1926 curriculum for the first time in the Turkish education system. The topics of this course were covered as citizenship education, under the title of Musahabat-ı Ahlakiye and Malumat-ı Vataniye [Civics] in previous periods (Kaya, 2020). The 1924 curriculum was quickly constructed during the Turkish War of Independence and mostly failed to fully meet the needs of the newly-established state (Kaya, 2022). Therefore, it remained in effect for only two years. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk wished to bring foreign experts from abroad and prepare a curriculum integrated with the educational systems of the civilized world. The 1926 curriculum was prepared for this reason with the contribution of John Dewey, who was invited to Turkey for this purpose.

One of the most important changes made in the 1926 curriculum was that the Life Studies course in primary education was separated from the civics course and was included in the curriculum with a new name and changed content within the framework of John Dewey's understanding of education. Dewey's perspective on education is pragmatism, which means, for him, the results should be in a way that works for the person. Therefore, the new curriculum was prepared with these needs in mind. It was desired to educate citizens for this reason by making the collective teaching and vocational training approach the center of the Life Studies course in this new curriculum, in which a special importance was given to interdisciplinary education. In particular, organizing most of the courses around the content of Life Studies and associating them with each other were important changes. Covering the first three semesters of primary education makes this course pivotal. The aim was to adapt students to social life and to teach them fundamental information.

There are a number of studies in the literature regarding this curriculum. These are the following: *Primary education curricula and the Life Studies curriculum from the Republic to the present* by Erkan (1996); *Examining the Life Studies curricula in terms of curriculum development in the Republican era* by Demir (1998); *Historical development of Life Studies curriculum in Turkey* by Özbey (2001); *Evaluation of Life Studies curricula* by Bektaş (2001); *Examining the Life Studies curricula in Turkey from the foundation of the Republic to the present day* by Şahin (2009); and *the Assessment of Life Studies curricula* by Atik and Aykaç (2019). However, most of the studies are related to the general features of the curriculum. Specifically, the entire curriculum has not been translated from Ottoman Turkish to contemporary Turkish, and its content has not been revealed. However, in this study, the entire curriculum is transcribed and its content is discussed in depth. Additionally, the Life Studies course is extremely valuable, since it is the beginning of citizenship education, because there are important clues in the curricula in terms of what kind of citizens the State wishes to raise at an early age. These studies mostly

focus on comparing the purpose and objectives of the Life Studies curricula prepared after 1930s. Once again, these studies do not focus on the content of the first Life Studies course, which was included in the 1926 curriculum. They are rather in the form of a general evaluation or summary of all the curricula prepared in the Republican era. However, in this study, the 1926 curriculum is covered as the first Life Studies curriculum of the Republic in terms of its content. In this study, answers are sought to many questions, such as which topics were covered in the curriculum, what kinds of skills and values the curriculum aimed to provide the children, and what the philosophy of the curriculum was. Therefore, the current study differs from existing studies in these aspects, and is aimed at making an important contribution to the national literature in this regard.

The purpose of the 1926 curriculum was in general to lay the foundation for a collective teaching approach, and to enable children to get to know and learn about their immediate environment. The aim was also to have children embrace national values as a goal. The rationale for the preparation of the Life Studies curriculum was clearly stated in the introduction. It is stated in this part that primary education will be divided into two phases, and the Life Studies course would be designed as a pivotal course. Courses such as History, Geography, Musâhabât-ı Ahlakiye [Civics], Arts, Handicrafts, Health and Basic Mathematics were combined as a requirement of the collective teaching approach. This was a necessity set forth by John Dewey's collective teaching approach. When we keep this rationale in mind, the influence of John Dewey on the curricula is clearly seen.

It was expected from the curriculum that the courses complement each other and that children learn by observing and experiencing in the school environment. The idea that there was no connection between the courses in the previous curricula, and that this did not provide adequate learning for children was emphasized, and the courses were linked through the concept of the collective teaching approach in the new curriculum. An aim was also that the curriculum had a content that would help children prepare for life and the professions. In fact, according to Dewey, school should be an institution that would prepare the child for life. The child should be educated at school like an entrepreneur. In other words, the school was seen as a place of preparation for the professions. Determining the needs of children and preparing them for life within the framework of these needs was an important goal in this respect. The necessity of considering the environment and conditions in which children live has been emphasized while determining the needs.

For the children, getting to know their environment, and the animals and plants living around them, was the main purpose during the first three semesters of the Life Studies course. The curriculum was designed with a content enabling children to learn the lines of work in their region as well. In this respect, flexibility was built into the curriculum according to the regions. Linking the content of the curriculum with the region in which children live would make it easier for them to learn about both their environment and the lines of work around them; that is, schools would raise children as entrepreneurs.

The curriculum was planned as four hours per week for all grade levels with an intense content, which was prepared based on each grade level. The course content in the first grades was organized according to the teaching units of Our School, Home and Family, Autumn, Republic Day, and Winter and Spring. The purpose here for the children was to help them learn about their school, home and life there and to become adapted to the rules. The aim was also for the children to see seasonal changes, learn about seasonal crops and observe seasonal weather changes. The second grade included the teaching units of Autumn, Republic Day, Winter, Spring and Summer. The purpose for children throughout this period was to observe life in nature, to learn about winter preparation, to protect nature, to heat the house and school, to look after themselves and to learn about a healthy life. Through the Spring season unit, the aim was for children to gain new information, such as the greening of plants, observing the change of natural events, learning about animal species, and the lengthening of days. As for the third grade, there were Autumn, Republic Day, Winter, and Spring teaching units. The purpose of this class was for children to learn the lines of work, government organization, regional administrators, means of communication, non-governmental organizations, protection against infectious diseases, and the Republic and constitutionalism.

It seems that the curriculum clearly aimed to provide students with a number of important skills. These include perceiving time and space, observing continuity and change, learning by doing, decision-making, recognizing national and universal values.

Consequently, the curriculum obviously reflected the educational philosophy of John Dewey. In particular, the collective education approach and the principle that school prepares the child for life as an entrepreneur took a significant place in the curriculum. Life Studies was therefore accepted as the pivotal course, in which a special importance was given to the preparation of the child for the professions. As a result, the Life Studies course began to be included in the Turkish educational system for the first time as a stand-alone subject with the 1926 curriculum. Therefore, John Dewey's visit to Turkey and the reports he prepared played a key role in the emergence of the Life Studies course.

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