

ARTISTIC EDUCATION IN TURKEY

A Educação Artística na Turquia

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Abstract

This Article Aims to study Turkey's Education system, history and culture. The Article includes Turkish Educational system from the beginning till today. It also includes the importance of Education and the effects of culture. One of the many important functions of art is to encourage people to see different cultural perspectives and enable them to better understand and appreciate themselves and others. Engagement with art from other cultures may help us transform our understanding of learning (Joseph & Southcott, 2009). Art has the tremendous potential to develop children's cross-cultural competence and experience, and it can reveal the values and beliefs of a culture, while helping children view the world from new perspectives.

Resumo

Este artigo visa estudar o sistema educativo, histórico e cultural da Turquia. O Artigo inclui o sistema educacional turco desde o início até aos dias de hoje. Também inclui a importância da Educação e os efeitos da cultura. Uma das muitas funções importantes da arte é encorajar as pessoas a ver diferentes perspectivas culturais e permitir-lhes compreender e apreciar melhor a si próprios e aos outros. O envolvimento com a arte de outras culturas pode ajudar-nos a transformar a nossa compreensão da aprendizagem (Joseph & Southcott, 2009). A arte tem um enorme potencial para desenvolver a competência e experiência transcultural das crianças, e pode revelar os valores e crenças de uma cultura, ao mesmo tempo que ajuda as crianças a verem o mundo a partir de novas perspectivas.

Keywords: *Education; Culture; Art; Turkey.*

Palavras-chaves: *Educação; Cultura; Arte; Turquia.*

Data de submissão: março de 2020 | **Data de Publicação:** setembro de 2021.

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INTRODUCTION

Culture can be defined as arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. Culture is an important and unchangeable aspect of our lives; we are all part of a culture. Culture is the heart and soul of a society, group organization: it is the manifestation of what a particular set of people thinks, feels, believes and holds as ideal. It is the communication of what people view as good and bad, right and wrong. This makes art education necessary.

Culture shapes individuals' views of the world and how to interpret it. It defines us and we define it. We absorb, and then come to know our own cultural behavior and recognize cultural difference through education (Pang, 2001). While culture is specific to a particular community, it can be shared with other nations and people; furthermore, it can be re-interpreted. Cultural understanding and awareness can be developed. Because educational institutions play a key role in this process, designing appropriate curricula to address this aim is important (Fantini, 1995). Generally speaking, students find learning more meaningful when it connects to their life outside school. Intercultural awareness increases through interaction and communication with people from other cultures. Creating interaction between cultures is important educationally also because this facilitates a multicultural and global worldview (Eristi, 2009).

Education System in Turkey

Every culture has its own cultural education system. Education is what differentiates us from other living beings on earth. When we think about education one can say it will unlock numerous doors that will lead to success. When we look at Turkey's education system Curriculum studies in Turkey have an extensive background that goes back to the early nineteenth century when the first general elementary school curriculum was introduced (Varis, 1996). In the twentieth century, there were more systematic innovations in curriculum development studies starting with the establishment of the Republic in 1923. A year later, in 1924, with the Law of Common Education, the Ministry of National Education became the only authority responsible for the operation of all educational institutions (Gozutok, 2003). Considering the needs of the newly established Republic, initial curriculum development studies in elementary education (The Primary School Curriculum) began just after the Law was put into effect. After a two-year

implementation of the curriculum, a major revision was accomplished by considering the needs of the country and developmental characteristics of students. The revised Primary School Curriculum was in effect for ten years until a new round of curriculum development studies were conducted in 1936. In the following years, due to climate changes in the economical, political, and social structures of the Turkish society, a need arose to revise the curriculum; as a result, in 1948, the curriculum faced new changes.

The principles of the Primary School Curriculum were rearranged and grouped under four elements: social, individual, human relations and economics (Binbasioglu, 1995). In 1962, there was another curriculum initiative to align the existing content of the curriculum to the necessities of the society and country. In the 1962 model, the 14 different subject fields of the 1948 Curriculum were grouped under five content areas according to their relations. This model also was so flexible that the consumers of the curriculum could alter the program according the needs of the local community (Karagoz, 1965). The 1962 Curriculum was in use for six years. During this time frame, classroom teachers, academicians from universities and other curriculum experts continuously monitored the implementation process and revised the program. The 32 Elementary school curriculum reform in Turkey revisions were finalised in 1968 and officially approved as the 1968 Curriculum. Later, in 1982, a new program model was presented by the Ministry of National Education. This program was prepared through collaborations with universities. The rapidly changing nature of the society, technology and culture resulted in a new wave of curriculum change in the early 1990s under the guidance of the National Education Development Project supported by the World Bank. With this project, it was planned to develop high quality instructional materials and textbooks for improving the level of schooling in Turkey.

As a result of these efforts, in 1993, a new curriculum was adopted by the Department of National Educational Research and Development of Education (EARGED) in cooperation with the National Education Development Project. Between 1993 and 2003, revisions were carried out in individual content area curricula. For instance, the mathematics curriculum in 1998 and the science curriculum in 2000 were considerably revised. Lastly, in 2003, new curriculum studies concerning five content areas, including mathematics, science, social science, life science, and Turkish were initiated by the Ministry of National Education. In this paper, we will describe and discuss the fundamentals of the new curriculum initiative. It is noted that we use the terms

curriculum and program interchangeably. Being a continuous process, evaluation and pilot studies of the new curriculum, and development of the instructional materials are still in progress.

Contrary to the constant change in the administrative structure of the ministry of education, one thing remains unchanged in the Turkish educational system, its being based on the memorization of knowledge transferred to student by the teacher. In this system, the main focus is on the grade and grading is used to discipline the student. Knowledge learned through not experience but the textbook is forgotten when it is of no use; that is, right after the exam is passed. This system does not at all foster understanding, critical reasoning and independent and free thinking of the student. Students are treated as if they are empty vessels to be filled information by the teacher who represents the authority to be feared and obeyed. Questioning is out the window, and those who question are regarded as troublemakers. Naturally, such an educational system which itself is far from being democratic will not and cannot foster a free and democratic society. (Ahmet F. Korur, 2002).

History of Art Education in Turkey

When we talk about culture we have to consider the history it has. Currently in Turkey art education is viewed as a non-core subject (Acer, 2015), with no authoritative recognition and consensus about the type and range of its educational importance. Yet, despite this largely marginalized position, art education remains a curriculum subject within the education systems, suggesting that some value is attributed to its role in the education and development of children. In light of this, it is important to understand the key historical developments within art education, so that its place in the education of Turkey might be better understood (Yige, 2017). When we look at the history of art education in Turkey. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, a New Turkish Republic was established on October 29th, 1923. Following this establishment, in 1939, the Ministry of National Education published a series of books and papers that were written by foreign experts who were invited to Turkey in the initial years.

Undoubtedly Kemal Ataturk, the founder of Turkey, played a key role in the improvements in art education as well as other areas of education. Amongst these publications is a Report on Turkish Educational System written by American philosopher

John Dewey. Dewey's report has 6 articles, that mentions the names of experts invited between 1924 to 1934 (Dewey, 1939). Dewey was the first foreign expert who visited Turkey in 1924; he stayed for several months in the summer, delivered speeches to different entities about education and prepared several reports about education system. Dewey's second article, and the eighth article especially, Fundamental Report, provides an insight on the training of professional educationalists. The report provides important information, especially regarding the importance of arts in the earliest year of the Turkish Republic and the rationale for having art courses in the education programs.

Furthermore, Dewey mentions, "all the things I saw have persuaded me that Turkish youth have an above average ability in painting, drawing and dying arts. It is effectual to develop this privilege in order to protect both its own place and the nation's place in the civilization with regard to the assurance of the culture of Fine Arts. Moreover, it has an economical value for the recreation of arts benefiting from other paintings and its development." From Dewey's expression, it seems evident that he had been monitoring arts education at schools and the talent and potential of art students. (Özsoy V.) The main reason behind this invitation was to found an independent culture through public schooling and democratization of education, as well as to train a sufficient amount of teachers who shared and believed in this democratic ideology (Ata, 2000). Upon his coming, Dewey stated that implementing other countries' education systems without amending or making necessary changes would be risky (Ata, 2000).

It is known that in the initial years of the Turkish Republic, schools, especially at the Istanbul Teacher Training School, provided courses about fine arts (Baltacıoğlu, 1932). Dewey observed the Turkish youth's artistic ability as being strong, and if they are educated well in the arts, their contribution to fine arts will make an immense contribution to the arts and culture of the civilization. In regard to training of art teachers, Dewey observed, "despite all the difficulties, Istanbul Academy of Fine Arts does well. However, it is too crowded in its inappropriate building. It will develop an educational step forward to be organized for training arts teacher within the Academy of Fine Arts." Dewey also conveys that there is a strong need for necessary equipment and building, which will be constructed according to its own goal and function for this mission. This shows that Dewey foresaw a separate program for training arts teacher.

As a result of these studies done by foreign experts in Turkey, and Baltacıoğlu's studies in foreign countries, a "Course on Arts Teaching" was organized in the Istanbul Academy of Fine Arts in 1927. In this course, Baltacıoğlu taught "Methods of Art Teaching" to the academy students, who wanted to become art teachers (Özsoy, 1996). Prior to this, in 1926, Ismail Baltacıoğlu and Ismail Tonguç prepared a framework of preparatory work for the new curriculum, which had courses for primary and secondary school teachers. This framework was made to enable teachers to conduct arts and handicraft classes easily. Furthermore, "Fine Arts Legislation" was prepared and a commission was formed, that was charged with establishing and improving fine arts education in Turkey (Tonguç, 1932).

The Art Education in Turkey Now

Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, there has been a significant change in the number of lessons and time dedicated for the arts subjects. In the 1920s, art was highly valued and occupied significant lesson hours per week compared to today (12.3% of total curriculum). Number of art lessons (especially for the first three grades) gradually reduced from the curriculum, first from 4 hours per week to 3 hours in 1962 and 1 hour in 1968 (Fer, 2005; Kurtulus, 2002). In 1974, the number of total lessons per week increased from 26 to 35, and for the first three grades art lessons per week were increased to 3 hours (MEB, 1974).

Therefore, an effort was made to restore arts education to its previous place in the curriculum, but this did not last long, as there was a reduction of total lessons per week to 25 hours in 1975 and the length of art lessons was cut to 1 hour for the first 3 years. Throughout this time, for Grade 4 and 5 students, lesson hours for arts remained at 2 hours per week. In the 1986 curriculum, the number of hours per week in the primary school rose to 30 hours for the first 5 years (first–fifth grades) and art lessons occupied 2 hours per week for all elementary school students. After this change, for a long time these scheduled hours for art lessons did not change (Kurtulus, 2002). In 1997, 8 years of compulsory education was introduced but there were still no changes in lesson hours for visual arts (MEB, 1997).

In 2007, the new curriculum was implemented by the MEB and the time of art lessons was set at 2 hours per week for the first 3 years of primary school, with 1 additional hour offered as an elective subject. From fourth grade until eighth grade, the number of lessons were reduced to a 1 hour session; however, students were able to choose art lessons for their 2 hours of elective classes (MEB, 2007). In the 2012 weekly curriculum for primary schools, it can be seen that the lesson hours per week were reduced to 1 hour per week for all grades.

Although for the first 4 years this number remained stable, between the fifth and eighth grades in addition to their 1 hour, 2– 4 hours of elective classes were offered to students, art classes being among the elective options (Fer, 2005; Kurtulus, 2002; MEB, 2013, 2014a). The reduced lesson hours per week show that art education was no longer a priority within the Turkish education system. In the 2014 weekly curriculum for primary schools, the lesson hours per week were reduced to 1 hour per week for all grades. Although for the first 4 years this number remained stable, between the fifth and eighth grades, 2– 4 hours of elective classes were offered to students, art classes being among the elective options.

In addition to the statement made previously, the reduced lesson hours per week and the introduction of the elective option again show that art education was no longer a priority within the Turkish education system (MEB, 2014a, 2014b). The new curriculum program for arts and design education was implemented in 1992 (DES, 1992) and revised ARTS EDUCATION POLICY REVIEW 5 Downloaded by [UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE LIBRARIES] at 02:27 04 January 2018 by the authorities in 2005. In 2006, the title of arts and crafts education was changed to visual arts and the syllabus was updated (MEB, 2006; Yazar & Agci, 2013) and in 2013, a new curriculum was accepted by the MEB (2013). The term “visual arts” refers to the elements of art and principles of design, and the bringing together of the imagination, ideas, creativity, and skills for a specific aesthetic. In 2014, the MEB (2014b) published another document for art as an elective subject. In this document, drawing, graphic design, ceramics, water marbling, ornamenting, and miniatures were discussed in a subsection within the elective class. Significantly, it also emphasized the needs of special educational needs (SEN) pupils and that individual education plans (IEPs) are required to be prepared and necessary changes in the classroom must be implemented as required (MEB, 2014b).

Although the art education in Turkey has produced successful artists here and there, the art world has not been able to extend beyond a very limited circle of a few artists, art critics and the fine arts schools. This art network begins in the studios of the fine arts schools in universities and continues with private galleries and studios. Even the determination of specific talents is left to the entrance examinations to the fine arts faculties. Thus, there is a need to create an educational system that finds, directs and prepares talents for higher art education.

CONCLUSION

This article provides a broad overview of the history of art education in Turkey. It also gives a perspective of the general education system and Turkey's culture. The article gives an idea of the Turkish art education before and after. In addition to the statement made previously, education is also to continuously reconstruct and reorganize society. For this purpose, schools should develop plans, programs and projects. However, the most important goal is to change the way people think. Students need to believe that they are capable of changing society. In constructivist education, teacher plays a central role in developing tools, strategies, techniques and methods. It is very important that the learning environment should be democratic. Students without any restrictions should be able to discuss any issue and the teacher should stay neutral without imposing his/her beliefs (Ahmet, 2002). Undoubtedly the perspectives of the authorities toward the arts play a significant role in the course of art education. Ozsoy (2012) argues that the awareness of and interest in art education is not evident among educationalists or within the society. The reason behind this lack of interest lies in education itself because educating society about art is necessary. In this way an awareness can be raised toward the significance of art education, as well as generating an aesthetical and artistic understanding.

Art education is necessary for the students who will get or are getting art education to become firstly an individual and then an intellectual. Eliot W. Eisner (1972, p. 184) summarizes this necessity as below: Art education for an intellectual necessity (It increases communication inter-persons, creativity and learning wish), Art education for social necessity (it increases contribution, it enables the person to gain the ability of expressing himself/herself and choosing the right), Art education for individual necessity

(it provides physical, ethical, aesthetical, emotive development of person) Art education for productive necessity (individual values his/her free time, he/she has a job, he/she makes contribution to production) For a better education in respect of these necessities, there is a need of appropriate Physical structure, qualified lecturers and students who are open to learn, desirous, and have this capacity (Melek, 2009).

Contemporary societies need to develop educational and cultural strategies and policies that transmit and sustain cultural and aesthetic values and identities to promote and enhance cultural diversity, and to develop peaceful and prosperous sustainable. 21st century societies are in ever more need for an innovative workforce that is more creative and flexible and can adapt to different conditions. Art and arts education help children, youth and all lifelong learners in the acquisition of skills necessary in the 21st century information economy.

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