

Global Perspectives and Challenges on Teacher Education in Turkey

Bulent Tarman, Selcuk University, Turkey

Abstract: There have been noticeable developments in technology and knowledge all over the world which have created an amazing learning environment and impacted teaching and learning. As globalization and knowledge societies expand, reform on the teacher education programs is becoming an important issue because teachers are always seen as moderators of a changing society. Consequently, countries had to improve their educational systems in order to provide their people enough knowledge to use this technology. Paralleling fast changes in Turkish society, like in other countries, there have been some changes in the purpose of the functioning of education. Hence, the necessity to make improvements in teacher preparation and training is a current issue. To be highly qualified, teachers must be well prepared, especially in improving the quality of education facing global challenges. For this purpose, we need teacher education reform that aligns teacher preparation with the demands of an emerging information society and an increasingly interdependent world in the 21st Century. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop a clear understanding on the following question: What would be the nature of a teacher preparation program for Turkish teachers (especially social studies teachers) that would take into account the demands of a global perspective engendered by an imminent entrance into the EU for Turkey? In other words, how should Turkish teacher education programs be modified to make teachers more globally aware and responsive in their teaching? In this regard, first, I provide a brief history of teacher education in Turkey and give a brief description of what teacher education programs currently look like. Second, I examine the roles of global actors (World Bank, EU etc..) in teacher education and finally I suggest what changes could be made to improve the quality of the program.

Keywords: Teacher Education/Preparation, globalization, Turkey

Introduction

There have been noticeable developments in technology and knowledge all over the world which has created an amazing learning environment and impacted teaching and learning. As globalization and knowledge societies expand, reform on the teacher education programs is becoming an important issue because teachers are always seen as moderators of the changing society. Consequently, countries had to improve their educational systems in order to provide their people enough knowledge to use this technology.

Paralleling fast changes in Turkish society, like in other countries, there have been some changes in the purpose of the functioning of education. “It is believed that improved educational opportunities will foster a society dedicated to, and capable of reconstructing and improving social conditions” (Turkish Ministry of National Education, MoNE, 1998, p.11). Since the 1970s, the Turkish Republic has taken many strides to increase the quality of education such as giving the responsibility of teacher education to universities and instituting eight-year compulsory education.

As it is emphasized in Guven’s study (2008), there were “two trends in the 1980s and 1990s influenced educational policies all over the World. The first was the appearance of a new set of economic conditions associated with significant increases in the global competition faced by previously relatively well-protected national economies...In education, the changes brought on by globalization have been manifested through various channels and mechanisms as reforms of structures, modes of financing, administration and curriculum”. This was a neo-liberal economic policies movement in several countries which caused to cut “public expenditure, and to maximize the economic benefits of educational spending by increasing its efficiency and directing its goals to economic rather than social or cultural ends” (Guyen, 2008).

The second trend was a series of fundamental educational reforms; of which changes in the structure and content of teacher education were usually a part. The rigidity and control of teacher education reform policies playing into the hegemonic ideology of globalization might also be a way to create an illusion of organization and certainty in a world that is becoming more uncertain as boundaries open up and disappear (Guyen, 2008).

As a result of these strides, like in most of the countries, having effective and successful teachers in Turkish schools has become an important issue because teachers are the ones who apply education policy, affect this policy with results of their application and are responsible for the raising productive individuals for a society. Hence, the necessity to make improvements in teacher preparation/training is a current issue. Teachers to be highly qualified must be well prepared, especially in improving the quality of education facing global challenges. For this purpose, we need teacher education reform that aligns teacher preparation with the demands of an emerging information society and an increasingly interdependent world in the 21st Century.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop a clear understanding on the following question: What would be the nature of a teacher preparation program for Turkish teachers (especially social studies teachers) that would take into account the demands of a global perspective engendered by an imminent entrance into the EU for Turkey? In other words, how should Turkish teacher education programs be modified to make teachers more globally aware and responsive in their teaching?

In this regard, first, I will provide a brief history of teacher education in Turkey. Then, I will give a brief description of what teacher education programs currently look like. Second, I will examine the roles of global actors (World Bank, EU etc..) in teacher education and finally I will suggest what changes could be made to improve the quality of the program. What follows is an overview of the educational system of Turkey.

Brief History of the Modern Teacher Education in Turkey

The first Turkish teacher training institution, known as the Darulmuallimin, was established around the middle of the 19th century in Istanbul. Despite the fact that many different models of teacher training have been implemented since then, the main change in the Turkish teacher preparation system occurred in 1981 when the responsibilities and activities of teacher training were transferred from Ministry of National Education (MONE) to the universities (Akyuz, 2004).

After establishment of the Republic in 1923, Turkey selected a direction that aimed to take her place among the “developed nations” of the world. Those developed nations were perceived as “Western world” (Cakiroglu & Cakiroglu, 1999). Applying for the full membership of the EU can be thought as an outcome of this desire in this regard. To reach this goal, education has always been considered as the most important tool and many reforms have been undertaken to improve it (Tarman, 2008; 2010).

During the reform movement, the Turkish educational system was centralized by the government with the act of “The Law on Unification of Education¹” in 1924. This act was the first radical arrangement in the field of education and put all educational systems under the control of the Ministry of Education (LUI, 1924). Since then all important policy and administrative decisions including the appointment of teachers and administrators, the selection of textbooks, and selection of subjects for the curriculum are made by the Ministry of Education. Still today a national curriculum is followed in every school and educational activities in schools are controlled by the supervisors assigned by the Ministry of Education (Seferoglu, 1996).

In the early years of the republic, two types of teacher education school were designed to meet the different demands of the regions: (a) Primary teacher schools for urban areas and (b) village teacher schools for rural areas (Cakiroglu & Cakiroglu, 1999). In the first half of the century the main interest was on improving the educational level of

¹ This law mentioned that:

- a) All educational and scientific institutions within Turkey are affiliated with the Ministry of national Education.
- b) All schools as administered by the Ministry of Justice and Foundations shall be transferred and attached to the MNE.
- c) Primary education will be compulsory for all citizens of both sexes and is free of charge in state schools.

average people in rural “Anatolia”. The purpose of the latter group schools was to educate teachers for villagers where people’s educational needs are different from those urban regions. The best known of these attempts was the “Village Institutes” (Koy Enstituleri) in the 1940s (Cakiroglu & Cakiroglu, 1999). Although there are two extremities² on the success and appropriateness of those schools, there is a common ground that these institutes have a very unique place in Turkish history of education because they were based on the practical needs of the village people, and problem solving in real-life situations (Binbasioglu 1995; Gursimsek et al., 1997; Basgoz, 1995). However, because of some political reasons, the practice of “Village Institutes” was ended in 1954.

In the second half of the century there were two major adjustments in teacher education policies in Turkey. First one was the acceptance of “Basic Law of National Education” (Milli Egitim Temel Kanunu) in 1973. According to this law, teachers should be educated in higher education institutions. The second major change in teacher education was made in 1981 by transferring the responsibility of teacher education from the Ministry of National Education (MNE) to the autonomous universities through the Higher Education Council (Cakiroglu & Cakiroglu, 1999).

Current Teacher Education Programs

As I mentioned earlier, the main change in the higher education system took place in 1981 which introduced a “unified” higher education, integrating all academies and teacher training institutions into the universities. Previously, teacher training/preparation was made up of three different units: universities, academies and teacher training institutions, which were both administratively and academically attached to the Ministry of Education. Accordingly, it was assumed that problems such as the quality of education, the quality and the number of staff, etc. could easily be solved. However, “as a result of this unification and increase in the number of admissions, faculties began to suffer from a lack of physical facilities, equipment, faculty, and so forth. To fill the faculty gap, many faculty members of the colleges of science and letters were transferred to the education faculties”(Guvén, 2008; OECD, 2005).

In Turkey, the Higher Education Council (HEC), determines the requirements for the promotion of academic staff and the standards for university degrees besides other duties. “For faculties and graduate schools of education, it also defines in some detail the structure of teacher education programs leading to qualified teacher status. The length of each program, the number of credits, the titles of courses, and a summary of the content of the courses which constitute a teacher education program, plus the qualification the program leads to, are all laid down by the HEC” (Grossman, Sands, Brittingham, 2010).

²some scholars argue about the effectiveness of those schools while others completely do not agree (Binbasioglu 1995; Gursimsek et al., 1997; Basgoz, 1995).

Therefore, the HEC has restructured all the teacher education programs that currently exist in Turkey, and continues to develop and modify them as necessary along with the aim of entering the European Union (EU). However, a countrywide national system of standards and accreditation of universities and of departments within universities, regardless of subject area, is not yet in place in Turkey. (Grossman, Sands, Brittingham, 2010). In fact, with the same aim, Turkey has been trying to prepare its teacher education system in accordance with the EU educational standards. Therefore, universities organize congresses to search for the enrichment and improvement of teacher education. The Ministry of National Education grants scholarships for students who are placed at teacher education divisions, to provide qualified student input into teaching profession, and further work on the improvement of teachers' economic and social status (Guncer, 1998).

Based on the educational guidelines and aims of the education systems of EU members, The Union emphasizes that economic growth depends on having higher skills in the workforce and improving the quality of education levels is the best way to improve skills of the labor force. The EU has therefore called on its member countries to ensure that their school systems set and meet high quality learning standards, increase education opportunities at all levels, allow youth to pursue flexible learning paths, and make sure the education system is meeting the needs of the labor market. Additionally, as part of the EU's Lisbon Agenda benchmarks, the EU has established specific educational targets for its member states: by 2010, 85% of young people should have a complete secondary education (MONE' 2004).

Several teacher education programs of different countries such as US, Britain, Germany and France, examined by HEC. Under the light of these examinations, the teacher education programs have been reconsidered in Turkey (Research, Planning and Coordination Board, 2000; 2001). Especially *in 1997–1998, HEC made a study of general accreditation issues in universities, and a feasibility study was undertaken by the British Council (1998). Some faculties or departments in professional fields, usually in the English-medium universities, and especially engineering and business faculties, have become accredited by overseas bodies (Grossman, Sands, Brittingham, 2010).*

One of the recent significant changes occurred in Turkish teacher education in 1999. As part of their four-year university preparation program, student teachers spent two weeks in the schools to do their practice teaching up until 1999 (Sands, as cited in Stevens & Demirezen, 2002). During these two weeks they were required to teach four lessons (Stevens & Demirezen, 2002). This was the only school based experience they received prior to receiving their teaching certificate. The teaching practice was usually part of or at the end of either a four-year program or an intensive six-month certificate program of "formation" courses at the university. Most mentor teachers "tolerated" the invasion of their classes by these strangers (6-10 students per mentor) for a short period of time. However, if the student teacher did not get along with the mentor for any reason,

their attempts to practice teach were curtailed (Erbaş, 2001 as cited in Stevens & Demirezen, 2002).

Meanwhile educational authorities realized that the national teacher preparation program did not adequately prepare their newly hired teachers (Guncer, 1998). Therefore, “theoretically” and/or “officially” the schools would not give the newly hired teacher full responsibility for any single class. Each new teacher would have to do an internship year, of lower pay and with reduced class size. In addition, the new hire may have a mentor teacher to observe them, give feedback and to assist in the development of their teaching skills. The idea or the way to get newly hired teachers accustomed with the school system in their first year experience under a mentor teacher supervision did not work because of the lack of teachers in the schools³. Therefore, new teachers find themselves in a struggle with this system of “learn on-the job”.

In 1999, following four years of study and consultation with Turkish and international educators in a World Bank Program, HEC mandated a change in teacher education in all universities in Turkey (Research, Planning and Coordination Board, 2000;2001). According to these regulations, prospective teachers could not receive a teaching license with so little classroom experience (Stevens & Demirezen, 2002). Furthermore, the importance of University-School partnership has finally been understood. Based on the changes, university faculties have to make contact with the schools, mentors and student teachers in the schools. Student teachers must work with mentor teachers and be supervised by university faculty in their field placements for at least one day a week over a year. At the same time students are required to take a 36 semester-credit sequence of teacher formation courses. In addition, for the first time, a Masters Degree program was approved with these regulations so that student teachers could major in content-based subjects as undergraduates but still receive a teaching license through a graduate program (Stevens & Demirezen, 2002).

Additionally, important changes have been made in the teacher training programs in the year 2006 which is a continuum of some innovations of the new system that have been in place since the 1998-1999 academic year.

³ Some public schools do not have enough teachers to teach different disciplines. Each year, about 1.300.000 children enter the elementary school, and the demand for education has shown a tendency to increase. The national education system has been over pushed to handle this demand. This puts great pressure upon the educational system. Overcrowded classrooms, shortage of teachers, and also inadequate allocation of instructional resources are just a few issues. “The sudden and massive migrations from rural areas to urban districts, from east to west, and from less developed regions to more industrialized areas have made it even more difficult for the MOE (Ministry Of Education) to plan its educational facilities. Some village schools have been closed because there are no students left; in others more than 80 to 100 students have to be trained in integrated classrooms, with three or five grade levels sharing one room and a single teacher” (Akarsu, 2000 p.323)

The main points of the Teacher Development Program of 2006 (Eraslan, 2008) are listed below: Programs will have a ratio of 50-60% branch theory and technique, 25-30% professional teaching theory and technique, and 15-20% general cultural information.

The new program has seen the end of the extra branch application as there is no longer seen as a need for this. Thus, with new programs, teachers will have more of an opportunity to study in depth their own branch. First time faculties are give the authorization to determine 30% of the components of the program they offer in their departments. This has led to an increase in the possibilities for elective subjects. One of the most important features of the new program is the increase in the ratio of the courses related with general culture which includes subjects such as Science, History, History of Turkish Education, and an Introduction to Philosophy (MoNE 2008).

European Union Desk was formed at the Education Ministry to help harmonize Turkey's educational system with those of EU countries. It works towards the following ends: Providing Turkish citizens and their children with the best educational services, improving the exchange of educational information between the EU countries and Turkey (MoNE, 2008).

The 1999 teacher education program was the result of a collaboration of Turkish teachers, university teacher educators, and Western consultants. This program was closer to the Western model that requires a different role for the mentors as well as university supervisors of the programs. These roles are adequately described in a guide book which clearly outlines activities, competencies, new roles and responsibilities for university faculty, schools, universities, mentors and student teachers (Koc, 1998).

Today, there are 146 (95 public and 51 private) universities in Turkey. While two of the public universities are more than 100 years old, 41 of the private universities were founded within the last decade. 72 (7 private and 65 public) universities have faculties of education, most of which offer dual (both regular and evening) programs. Although students in the evening programs are required to pay much higher tuition than the ones enrolling in the regular programs, they are admitted to the same courses of study with relatively lower scores than the regular students.

The recent programs in teacher education are summarized on the table.

Teacher Preparation Dimension	1982 Traditional Prog., University Ed. Faculty	1982 Traditional Prog., BA, acad.area + Cert.	1999 Turkish teacher education program	2006
Length of program	4 years	Teaching Certificate 4 Months	4 year undergraduate(UG) or Masters	4 year undergraduate(UG)
Time in Schools	8 weeks	None	10-24 weeks, 1 day-week + 2 intensives 1 month	Two semesters in schools in the 4 th year of the program: total 28 weeks in schools
Lesson taught in schools	4, if trusted by mentor	None	4-8 expected, observed with written feedback	Depends on the instructors availability
University supervisor role	Usually not visit schools	Usually not visit schools	Visits expected at least 2 a semester	Visits expected at least 2 a semester
Mentor teacher role	Not paid	Not paid	Paid, involved May have training	Paid, involved May have training
Teacher formation classes	39 credits over 4 year	12-15 credits for certificate	39 over 4 years if UG 56 over 2 years if MA	Programs will have a ratio of 50-60% branch theory and technique, 25-30% professional teaching theory and technique, and 15-20% general cultural information.

Global Trends & Non-State Actors

I have already mentioned about the two trends in the 1980s and 1990s influenced educational policies all over the World at the beginning of this study. Through these trends and movements, major international bodies such as World Bank, IMF and OECD and so forth provided loans and donors for consolidation of human rights, democracy and educational conditions in developing countries. These organizations can be referred as non-state actors since their activities are not bound the policies of particular states or

governments (Giddens, 2001). According to Giddens, there are several different types of non-state actors live alongside the transnational and these non-state actors play their role in three main areas. “First, they represent an international community of states (like UNESCO and UN). Second, they concern with processes that entail international collaboration or communication such as telecommunication and so forth. Last, they link states or other economic enterprises with mutual international interests (like IMF, EC and so forth.” (Giddens, 2001; Guven 2008). These actors create a world sharing order, which is an international system of production, distribution and consumption of information, capital, and culture. The International bodies have been replacing the nation states in the world and imposing their global hegemony into developing countries that are needed the loans and credits of them since 1970.

These bodies systematically enforce procedures based on their expectations so that their loans and donors are linked to structural changes in different civic and democratic implementations and conditions and conveyed in a participatory manner. These non-state actors place political and economic programs which appear to exit their own right and expectations and play a role in maintaining or altering those conditions. They exert their influence through stipulating that financial assistance to nation states is conditional upon the dismantling of trade barriers and of their entry into a global system of free markets, which again limits the ability of nation states to firewall their economies. The combination of these forces heavily conditions many nation state activities. Education is one such activity, not only in terms of its financing, but in terms of the uses to which it is actually put. There are, then, intimate connections between political globalization, economic forces, and national domestic policies (Guyen, 2008). In fact, these non-state actors determine some indispensable measures, which should be reflected into the implementations in different areas of the nation’s life. Moreover, the international institutes determine the usage way of loans and donors, the quality assessment schemes, technical skills and providing technical experts besides separating themselves from the ruling governments that is the helped nations becomes a distinct occupation and the new world view of international bodies is born. All these bring about inevitable disharmony between reality of the countries and expectations of national bodies. World has become increasingly interdependent-a process known as globalization (Guyen, 2008).

The nations do not determine the way of structural changes but the international bodies determine them. The international bodies that defend the global economy and globalization put forward some requirements for developing countries to constitute some strategic plans and procedures for reducing poverty and ensuring educational equality. In other words, the loans and donors are linked to particular conditions namely participatory conditionality (Guyen 2008).

Turkey is not an exception in this picture. The guidelines aimed at the education systems of EU members because of the recognition by the EU that economic growth depends on having higher skills in the workforce and that improving education levels is

the best way to improve skills of the labor force. The EU has thus called on its member countries to ensure that their school systems set and meet high quality learning standards, increase education opportunities at all levels, allow youth to pursue flexible learning paths, and make sure the education system is meeting the needs of the labor market. Furthermore, as part of the EU's Lisbon Agenda benchmarks, the EU has established specific educational targets for its member states: by 2010, 85% of young people should have a complete secondary education. (Güven, 2008; Tarman, 2008).

Turkey has been pushed by international bodies to prepare an agenda for improving the quality of education and delivering compulsory education into mass in short term in 1996. Turkey has been expected to implement aid and achieve development goals through so-called "education for all" The World Bank played a supportive and advisory role during the lending discussions from which the Ministry benefited (World Bank, 2005). The World Bank has supported similar reforms in nearby countries, including Hungary and Romania and in doing so has worked closely with the EU, which is already involved in two related projects in Turkey. These curriculum reforms are designed to prepare students better for growing knowledge economy and lifelong learning, and reflect similar changes in teacher education programs in many OECD and EU countries such as Germany, Norway, Sweden (Güven, 2008).

Within the harmonization process between Turkey and EU, in order to establish the communications for the works undertaken in accordance with the policies and principles determined in the education sector, the primary education system of European Union countries was examined in terms of structure, process and target and research was initiated to make a comparative study with the Turkish education system (Research, Planning and Coordination Board, 2000; 2001; Tarman, 2008; 2010).

In primary education schools within the orientation process research project, Germany, Austria, Britain and such EU countries, the studies for examining the orientation period is still in process. According to the results of this study, a new orientation model and assessment devices shall be developed in accordance with this model. The projects that were implemented in the EU in education, especially in higher education, and the international student education tendencies aim to raise professionals for the future who speak foreign languages and know foreign cultures (Research, Planning and Coordination Board, 2000; 2001; Tarman, 2008).

Studies in EU standards have been initiated concerning the education materials and textbooks and "student work books" suitable with active learning method and "teacher guide books" are already started to be prepared and used partially, which is part of an ongoing effort. In order to provide utilization of education materials, in service training was provided to 2.300 primary education inspectors and in service training is planned to be provided regarding the education materials in EU and recent information technologies (Tarman, 2008; Research, Planning and Coordination Board, 2000; 2001).

With the purpose of constructivist (student centered) education, in order to direct and guide modern course book preparation, sample course books and education programs have been brought from EU countries. The Foreign Textbooks and Education Programs Examination Bureau was opened within the Ministry for related individuals (Tarman, 2008; Research, Planning and Coordination Board, 2000; 2001).

Two separate documents named “Education Policies of EU Countries” and “EU Countries Education Control” were prepared and printed and provided for the related individuals. A study undertaken jointly by Georg Ecker Textbooks Institute, arrangement of textbooks in all fields in terms of their visual and educative design as well as harmonization of issues in History and Geography textbooks with EU education policies are targeted (Tarman, 2008; Research, Planning and Coordination Board, 2000; 2001).

Through fixed number of teaching personnel, the process of equal opportunity in education and training for each citizen in the context of human rights has been started. The fixed number of teaching personnel that has to be found at each school on the basis of branches has been determined so as to achieve full capacity utilization in employment of personnel. The norm determined on the basis of teachers shall be the accelerating force and leader of the norm to be determined at schools and other education institutions by taking into account the other inputs of education process. By this way, the study moving to teacher accreditation from “Accreditation in Education” criteria and indicators in EU countries has been started with certain features (Tarman, 2008; Research, Planning and Coordination Board, 2000; 2001).

Modifying Turkish teacher education programs to make teachers more globally aware and responsive

I have attempted to develop a clear understanding on the development of general teacher preparation programs in Turkey so far. Although I have not specified the social studies education program, all the explanations, issues, problems and/or changes are closely related with the social studies teacher education in particular. Therefore, I will particularly take the current social studies teacher preparation program to analyze Turkish social studies teachers and specific problems in terms of global awareness.

There are a number of challenges, problems, and issues that make teaching social studies from global and multicultural perspectives necessary. One, ethnic pluralism, is a growing global societal reality influencing the lives of young people all over the world. In one way or another, individuals get knowledge or beliefs (sometimes they are exposed to invalid information like the Armenian Holocaust), about ethnic and cultural groups. Biased beliefs and inaccurate knowledge about ethnic and cultural groups limit the perspectives of many and make a difference, often a negative difference, in the

opportunities and options available to members of ethnic and cultural groups (Banks, 2001).

I find the perceptual dimensions within global and multicultural education very important and relevant to solving education-related problems in Turkey. These perceptual dimensions include: open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, empathy, and non-chauvinism (Merryfield, 1998). Turkey remains essentially a male-dominated and ethnically diverse society. Unfortunately, the diversity of Turkish society has always been denied by the officials since the beginning of the modern Turkey and consequently the educational system has reflected this denial.

Refusing or neglecting the reality of the diverse structure of Turkish society has always become a temporary solution, or in a better explanation, the problems have been postponed. However, whenever Turkey applies to become a member of the EU, the issue has been brought in front of Turkey. The issue has been conceptualized with two main expressions: “human rights” and “democracy”.

One of the most important ways to deal with this issue is to educate the country’s people as democratic citizens, lifelong learners, and critical thinkers. Because of its nature, social studies education becomes a very significant discipline in this regard. So, to understand how it is related with the issues mentioned above; let’s look at the current social studies teacher preparation program in Turkey. Once one looks at the whole program, it is obvious that there is lack of courses focusing on the current events/issues. In addition, at the very beginning of this study, I mentioned about how important was technology development in today’s society and particularly in education. However, how Turkish social studies teachers have been prepared for this important element of education can be understood by looking the program. Before the 2006 modification, during the whole four-year program there was only one “computer” course offered in the second year of the program as a two credit/hours course out of 147. However, it is realized after then, and the number of credits/hours is increased with the change in 2006-07 programs. However, there is still a huge need to focus on global issues related courses so that teacher candidates be prepared as globally aware and skilful to educate their students.

At this point, I think, it is going to be very appropriate to ask the following questions: What understanding and knowledge should the student teachers hold about concepts of global education and global issues? What values, attitudes and skills should the student teachers have for teaching global education? What views should the student teachers hold about the role of global education in the teacher education program? What are the factors influencing their implementation of global education program with regard to global education?

Several well known studies (Merryfield, 1992; 1994; 1995; 1998; 2001; Merryfield & Remy, 1995; Merryfield, White, & McKinley, 1996) have already

addressed this type of questions. In the light of these studies to integrate global perspectives into the teacher education programs, a framework can be drawn as follows:

- Develop perspectives consciousness through examination of conflicting perspectives on historical or contemporary events.
- Develop global perspectives by examining information across local, national, regional and global data bases
- Begin a knowledge base and appreciation of local-global interconnectedness and interdependence.
- Choose global issues as the knowledge base for teaching social studies concepts and skills.
- Organize courses through an issues-centered global approach.
- Link social studies content to students' lives through global issues.
- Help students think about and connect global issues to problems or concerns in their own lives.

As teachers or teachers educators, we always keep in our minds, that “once students see that ‘their problem’ is indeed part of a larger problem that affects people like themselves in other parts of the world they are beginning to think globally” (Merryfield, White, & McKinley, 1996).

Recommendations and Conclusion

There has been some dissatisfaction with the teaching of social studies and preparation of its teachers in Turkey because of several reasons. One of the reasons is that while trying to improve our educational system, we have always disregarded our rich cultural, historical and social sources. Either with the aim of a entering the EU or reaching the global developments and standards, there has been a tendency to use Western knowledge. The idea that scientific knowledge is universal is one reason for such a transfer of knowledge. However, if this transfer has only one direction, and if there is a weak connection between the transferred knowledge and the needs of the society, hoping for a successful outcome with this transferring process can not be considered but a dream. In our particular case, it can be said that knowledge in the field of Turkish education is much imported form the Western countries. Therefore, “knowledge base” for educational research is obviously not a product of our own social histories and I believe that this is not helping us to build a relevant knowledge base that will be used to approach educational issues including teacher education. However, by saying this, I do not mean that we should not get any knowledge and development from the West. In contrast, there are many things that we can learn from American and Western countries but what I am saying is that there needs to be a filter of critical perspectives for any knowledge that is being used in the other cultures.

The following recommendations may be made in order to overcome the above obstacles. First of all, the social studies curriculum should be developed to take account

of the ways in which students learn, think and develop and of the various kinds of differences among children. But while developing the system, we should always consider the cultural aspects of our society. In addition, the Turkish social studies curriculum should be designed on the basis of encouraging children to think creatively and critically with an active study, using active imagination, active thinking and purposeful teaching.

Secondly, the curriculum of Turkish social studies teacher education departments should be restructured to educate effective, imaginative, creative and dynamic student teachers. With this in mind, the following points should be included when the secondary school history teacher education program is structured. First, student teachers should be given an adequate training in basic professional skills and the teaching of social studies. Secondly, they should be given opportunities to develop their creativity and reflective skills to enable them to be critical of their own and others' practice during their university and school-based studies. They should also be encouraged to work professionally and constructively within the changing demands of the teaching profession.

Thirdly, throughout the education process they should be given enough opportunities to develop their cognitive, motivational and interpersonal values and attitudes so as to become effective secondary school history teachers. Besides this, secondary school history teacher education programs should be restructured to educate those secondary school history teachers who are aware of the importance of social justice and equal opportunities in the classroom, schools and society.

Finally, history teacher educators working in secondary school history teacher education departments should upgrade their own knowledge and skills regarding contemporary changes in the teaching of social studies and teacher education. In particular, they should be informed about current ideas of ways to educate reflective, imaginative and creative secondary school history student teachers. Universities should also require and encourage their social studies teacher educators to undertake research into the teaching of history and in education. For this reason, the research facilities of social studies teacher educators should be increased and the findings of teacher educators' results should be used to improve the quality of social studies education in Turkish schools.

However, "should be" types of explanation are not enough by itself. It also brings "how" and "where" types of questions into our considerations. To answer these types of questions, one also needs to understand the general structure of Turkish educational system⁴. The Turkish National Educational System is regulated according to the basis of;

- Constitution of the Turkish Republic
- Laws Regulating Education and Instruction
- Government Programs

⁴ Therefore, I put an appendix to show the general structure of Turkish educational system at the end of this study.

- Development Plans
- National Education Councils

Each of the factors should be specifically considered to answer these types of questions⁵. Further studies need to be designed to analyze each factor but if one have to frame it with a couple statement, the most important things can be listed as follows: Laws regulating education and instruction should be reorganized with revolutionary actions such as decentralizing the educational system, abolishing the Higher Educational Council and, eliminating the influence of non-democratic foundations/organizations/ institutions on Turkish education like Turkish military.

Aligned with these factors, there are several ways to upgrade the teacher education departments such as being globally aware of the current developments by sending experts, teachers and students abroad. By this way they can find a chance to analyze other educational systems in the world and implement to our educational departments. Applying recent technological developments, and training teachers and students about the use of the technology is another way to upgrade the educational system. By integrating recent technological developments (computer, Internet for instance etc.), into the teacher preparation programs and their curriculum, teachers and pre-service teachers can be informed about current ideas of ways to educate reflective and creative teachers.

Mentoring a student teacher is another way to answer the “how” type of question. This is not only affects student teacher development but may have a concomitant effect on the mentor’s development (Elliott, 1995; Hawkey, 1997). Mentor teachers play a central role in the development of student teachers (Hawkey, 1997). First, they pass on tacit knowledge of school culture (Zeicher & Gore, 1990). Second, they open up the practice setting in the “real” world of their own classrooms to the novice (Feiman-Nemser, Parker & Zeichner, 1993). Finally, they are responsible for observing the student teacher in her lessons and giving constructive feedback to student teachers on teaching skills (Williams, Butt & Soares, 1992). Therefore, to educate reflective, imaginative and creative student teachers, alternative mentors development programs should be implemented in the teacher education system in today’s contemporary world. By this way, mentors can be exposed to build a knowledge base about how to work effectively with the adult learner, such as how to give substantive feedback that is acted upon, or how to document teaching through written observations (Kerka, 1998; Zimpher & Rieger, 1988). As student teachers bring research-based and university-endorsed methods to the classroom, mentor teachers are often exposed to a new repertoire of teaching strategies. After watching the student teacher and seeing the response of their

⁵ This is big enough to deal with and requires a separate study but I will give a brief explanation here. *Education and Training Laws*, for example, brings an issue to centralize the educational system. This centralization has been totally preventing the development of Turkish education. In fact, back in 1924, Dewey pointed this problem and I addressed this issue in another paper presented at CUFA/ NCSS conference in 2003.

own students to these methods, they may try out some of the methods themselves (Stevens & Demirezen, 2002).

In conclusion, as Guven emphasized in his study (2008), there is no simple or single answer to how globalization has affected education reform policies with regard to teaching, learning, and curricula. The aims of major structural changes in Turkey's education system were intended to meet the challenges of European integration and globalization and to bring higher quality to Turkish education and to bring better educational and employment opportunities for all students in Turkey by World Bank representatives. The global and the European challenge is to create a stronger education system which produces higher skills among graduates who can function in an increasingly complex and competitive labor market. This is obviously the same challenge that Turkey faces. Standards and assessments have been defined by international organizations at many different levels and in most academic subjects: curriculum and assessment standards for elementary and secondary school students, professional teaching standards and assessment for the certification of experienced teachers, professional teaching standards and assessment for new teachers, and program standards for the review and accreditation of teacher education programs.

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The approaches used cover a very broad range of options, and the British Council hopes that the volume will provide valuable insight for anyone interested in CPD in their own contexts and offer a means to reflect on and refresh practice for the benefit of teachers, trainers, and their students. This publication is free to download below in pdf format. Downloads. Professional development for English language teachers: perspectives from higher education in Turkey. Native English Teachers in Turkey. Education. Teaching Job Opportunities For Foreigners Living in Turkey. School. ELTNetwork-Turkey. Education. TESOL Turkey. Language School. English Jobs Turkey. English Teachers in Turkey. Education. Teacher Research for Professional Development 2013. Medical Research Center. foreigners in Turkey. Social Service. Teach it DIY. Classroom challenges are one of the adequate problems faced by teachers and a good teacher has the courage to overcome all these challenges bravely. Some of the common classroom challenges faced by teachers include lack of teamwork, minimal personal time, working towards long term goals, arguments and student excuses, etc. Addressing these common classroom challenges can not only help to improve teacher retention rate but also enhance success rates of student and the ultimate quality of education. Here we can have a look at some of the top classroom challenges faced by teachers in the present education