

Investigation of Activities Related to Specific Days and Weeks in Life Science Course in the Context of Classroom Teachers' Opinions¹

Gökhan Özkan²  Uğur Gezer³ 

To cite this article

Özkan, G., & Gezer, U. (2024). Investigation of activities related to specific days and weeks in life science course in the context of classroom teachers' opinions. *Qualitative Inquiry in Education: Theory & Practice*, 2(1), 23-41. <https://doi.org/10.59455/qietp.22>

Article Info:

Received: 14.06.2024

Revised: 23.06.2024

Accepted: 20.07.2024

Abstract

Purpose: Life science course is one of the courses in which students acquire essential life skills at the primary school level. Students acquire many skills, such as being aware of what is happening around them, having knowledge about cultural life, social participation, personalizing basic human values, being sensitive to the natural environment, and adopting a healthy lifestyle. Since life studies is a course that focuses on human and social life, activities related to specific days and weeks are significantly associated with the life studies course. This study aimed to examine the practices related to specific days and weeks within the scope of life studies course in line with the opinions of classroom teachers.

Method: The research was designed as a case study, one of the qualitative research methods. The participants were 20 classroom teachers selected according to the criterion sampling technique. The research data were collected through semi-structured interviews, and the data obtained were analyzed using the content analysis technique.

Findings: As a result of the research, it was determined that the activities related to specific days and weeks contribute to the course's importance in raising awareness in students, strengthening national unity and solidarity, and being sensitive to social events. It was determined that teachers did not find the activities related to specific days and weeks in the textbooks sufficient. Teachers stated that activities such as ceremonies and celebrations for specific days and weeks are not effective for students when they are unplanned and out of necessity, but more effective results are obtained when they are processed with active learning activities in the classroom. The teachers expressed problems such as lack of materials and resources and physical impossibilities as problems that prevented more effective handling of specific days and weeks.

Implications: Based on the results of the research, suggestions can be made for life science textbooks to reflect specific days and weeks more effectively, to increase the variety of resources and materials related to specific days and weeks, and to carry out activities related to specific days and weeks within good planning.

Keywords

life science, specific days and weeks, textbook, classroom teachers

¹This research article is based on first author's master thesis, supervised by the second author.

²Yozgat Azapbaşı Şehit Hasan Basri Kayaaltı İlkokulu, Yozgat, Türkiye, gokhanozkan6638@gmail.com

³**Corresponding Author:** Yozgat Bozok University, Education Faculty, Department of Primary Education, Yozgat, Türkiye, ugur.gezer@bozok.edu.tr

Introduction

The successful adaptation of children to their environment and social life constitutes the main purpose of education systems. Life science is one of the most important courses that enable children to exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors and to acquire knowledge about social life. Life science teaches the information necessary for individuals to solve the problems they may encounter in daily life and to live in a healthy way. In this way, individuals develop self-sufficiency skills and can live their lives independently (Şiringel, 2006).

Life science is a course that aims to contribute to primary school children's social, cultural, and individual development. Life science course aims to raise students as individuals who can communicate effectively in society, empathize, and work in cooperation by providing them with social skills. It raises awareness of moral and ethical behavior by teaching students basic values such as honesty, respect, and responsibility. Develops skills to cope with situations encountered in daily life, such as personal care, health, nutrition, and traffic rules. Raises awareness about environmental sensitivity and sustainability and provides information on issues such as the protection of natural resources and environmental pollution. It provides information about different cultures, traditions, and lifestyles, enabling students to understand and respect cultural diversity. Develops problem-solving skills and encourages independent thinking by providing students with information about decision-making processes. It helps students to learn about themselves, express their feelings, and set personal goals. It provides information on building interpersonal relationships, ranging from family to social relationships. It raises students' awareness of active citizenship through topics such as democracy, human rights, and civic responsibilities. These aspects of the life studies course contribute to the healthy development of children both individually and socially. Thanks to this course, students can become better equipped and ready to live.

Education and training processes aim not only to equip students with academic knowledge but also to provide them with social, cultural, and social nourishment by providing them with social heritage, cultural values, and national consciousness. When considered in this context, activities for specific days and weeks constitute an important part of the education and training process. Students gain awareness in various fields through these special days and contribute to their personal development. Specific days and weeks are celebration activities that create important opportunities for students to acquire knowledge under teachers' guidance and transform the acquired knowledge into continuous behaviors that require different knowledge, skills, and behaviors (Kurtdele Fidan, 2017). In addition to acting in accordance with the purpose of the day to be celebrated, specific days and weeks provide important opportunities for students to reveal and develop their different talents (Göçer, 2004). Celebrating specific days and weeks effectively and within a specific plan contributes significantly to creating a typical school climate by developing common language, feelings, values, and ways of thinking among teachers, students, school administration, and parents (Bozak & Özdemir, 2011). Life studies course is one of the important courses in which specific days and weeks are covered. One of the reasons why specific days and weeks are emphasized more frequently in life sciences lessons is the compatibility of specific days and weeks with the subjects and achievements in the life sciences curriculum. When the units and learning

outcomes in the life studies curriculum, such as life in our school, life in our home, healthy life, safe life, life in our country, and life in nature, are examined, it is seen that they reflect specific days and weeks.

Students better understand social events and phenomena through activities related to specific days and weeks in life studies lessons and make connections with the subjects they learn in the lessons (Gürdal, Şimşek, & Üredi, 1998). Specific days and weeks to be celebrated or commemorated in schools are included in life sciences lessons for purposes such as focusing the student's attention on that subject, making him/her understand its importance, providing him/her with comprehensive information about the subject with experiences appropriate to his/her level, and ensuring that he/she gains a positive attitude (Şiringel, 2006). Some positive individual and social developments can be achieved through the teaching of specific days and weeks with a wide range of topics such as human rights, independence, animal rights, understanding the importance of cultural and historical heritage, health, disaster and first aid. The teaching of specific days and weeks is an important part of developing civic awareness. By celebrating national and religious holidays, days and weeks that have spiritual importance for the society, it is possible to develop social and human characteristics and relationships, and to enable individuals to integrate with each other and the society (Gürdal, Şimşek, & Üredi, 1998). In the 2009 life science curriculum, 20 specific days and weeks were identified, and it was clearly stated which specific days and weeks would be addressed in which class according to grade levels. These 20 specific days and weeks are; Primary Education Week (first week of school), Animal Protection Day (October 4), World Children's Day (first Monday in October), Atatürk Week (November 10-16), Teachers' Day (November 24), October 29 Republic Day, Red Crescent Week (October 29-November 4), Human Rights Week (one week after December 10), Attitude, Investment and Turkish Goods Week (December 12-16), Energy Conservation Week (week starting on the second Monday in January), Green Crescent Week (March 1-7), Forestry Week (March 21-26), Libraries Week (the week starting on the last Monday in March), World Theater Day (March 27), April 23 National Sovereignty and Children's Day, Traffic Week (the week starting on the first Saturday in May), Mother's Day (the second Sunday in May), Museums Week (May 18-24), May 19 Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, and Environmental Protection Week (the week starting on the second Monday in June) (MEB, 2009). Monday of June) (MEB, 2009). In the 2018 life science curriculum, specific days and weeks are not specified individually, but it is explained that some of the acquisitions in the program should be taught by teachers in time periods corresponding to specific days and dates (MEB, 2018).

As can be seen from the explanations, activities related to specific days and weeks are important in life study lessons. Therefore, clarifying what kind of practices teachers carry out for specific days and weeks in life studies lessons will contribute to realizing more qualified practices in life studies lessons. In this context, the main purpose of this study is to examine the situation of specific days and weeks in life studies lessons based on the opinions of classroom teachers. In line with this purpose, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. What are the general opinions of classroom teachers about specific days and weeks?
2. How do classroom teachers evaluate including specific days and weeks in life science textbooks?
3. What are the activities and practices of classroom teachers regarding specific days and weeks in life studies lessons?
4. What are the problems that classroom teachers face in the teaching of specific days and weeks?
5. What do classroom teachers suggest in order to teach specific days and weeks more effectively?

Method

Research Design

This study aimed to examine the practices related to specific days and weeks within the scope of the life studies course in line with the views of classroom teachers. For this purpose, the study was conducted according to the basic interpretive qualitative research design (Merriam, 2009). The basic interpretive design focuses on the meaning-making process and is a type of qualitative research in which the researcher tries to understand the experiences, perspectives, and practices of the participants in-depth (Merriam, 2009). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) emphasize that qualitative research has a wide methodological range in understanding and explaining the social world. Researchers use qualitative research methods to examine social phenomena and human experiences in depth.

Study Group

The research study group consists of 20 classroom teachers working in Yozgat province in the 2023-2024 academic year. Participants were determined according to criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling types. Criterion sampling involves selecting situations that meet some predetermined importance criteria. Although there are many different purposive sampling strategies, it is seen that criterion sampling is widely used in qualitative research as it offers the chance to obtain in-depth data (Patton, 2001). The main criteria for determining the participants were having at least five years of seniority and working in schools in different socioeconomic environments. Each participant was given a code as T1, T2, ..., T20. Participant information is presented in Table 1.



Table 1

Personal information of the participants

Variables	Categories	Frequency
Gender	Female	10
	Male	10
Seniority	5-10 years	8
	11-15 years	8
	15 years and above	4
Degree of learning	Undergraduate	12
	Postgraduate	8
Total		20

As seen in Table 1, 10 of the participants were female and 10 were male. Eight of the teachers have a professional seniority of 5-10 years, 8 have a professional seniority of 11-15 years, and 4 have a professional seniority of 15 years or more. In terms of education level, 12 of the participants were undergraduate graduates and 8 were postgraduate graduates.

Data Collection Process

The research data were collected with a semi-structured interview form developed for teachers. In line with the research objectives, a draft interview form consisting of 14 questions was prepared by reviewing the studies in the literature. Then, the interview form was given to two experts to be examined in terms of content and construct validity. Two experts, one of whom completed his/her doctorate in life science education and the other with a high level of qualitative research experience, examined whether the questions were appropriate for the research purposes. As a result of the feedback from the experts, 4 overlapping questions were combined with other questions and the number of questions was reduced to 10. Then, the interview form was given to a Turkish language expert to be examined in terms of language and expression, and after some minor expression corrections in the questions, the interview form was piloted with 2 classroom teachers. After the pilot study, the interview form was finalized and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 classroom teachers.

Data Analysis

The data obtained during the research process were analyzed using the content analysis technique. Content analysis is used to determine the presence of specific words, themes or concepts in some given qualitative data. Using content analysis, researchers can measure and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such specific words, themes or concepts (Krippendorff, 1980; Morgan, 2022). Prior to the analysis, the data in the form of

audio recordings were transcribed by the researchers. Afterwards, all interview transcripts were transferred to NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software for analysis. Then, all data were coded line by line in the context of the research questions and themes were reached.

Credibility and Research Ethics

In qualitative research, the strategies and some of the ways followed to increase the credibility of the research ensure that the data obtained are scientific, valid, and reliable. Within the scope of the credibility of the research, it is important to collect data with valid and reliable tools. In this context, while developing the semi-structured interview form, the opinions of various experts were obtained, and the pilot application was carried out with two teachers in the last stage.

In qualitative research, obtaining participant confirmation after collecting the research data and reaching the main findings is an important element that increases the credibility of the research in terms of internal validity (Merriam, 2009). In this context, after the interview data were transcribed and macro-analyzed, tables with participant statements and coding were e-mailed to each participant. The participants were asked for feedback on the coding and interpretations presented and were asked to evaluate the accuracy of the interpretations and whether there were any missing or incorrect inferences. Coding and interpretations were revised in light of the feedback received.

Expert review is one of the strategies used by researchers to increase credibility in qualitative research. Since the researchers examine the data from a perspective from within the research, this may lead to misinterpretation of the data obtained from the participants, jeopardizing the research's credibility (Creswell, 2003). In order to prevent this limitation, two experts with high qualitative research experience were given approximately 20% of the data of the 2 participants coded by the researchers. Whether the researchers' coding was similar to the experts was calculated using Miles Huberman's (1994) formula for agreement and disagreement. As a result of the calculation, the agreement index was found to be 92%.

The researchers took care to act in accordance with ethical principles in all research processes. Before starting the research process, ethical approval was obtained from the Yozgat Bozok University Ethics Commission (Date: 30.03.2023, Decision No: 01/07), and then research permission was obtained from the Yozgat Provincial Directorate of National Education (Date: 11.05.2023, Number: E-55005497-20-76096590). An information form reflecting the purpose and process of the research was prepared by the researchers and in this form, it was committed that the participants had the right to withdraw from the research at any time. After the information about the research process, a consent form was obtained from the participants indicating that they voluntarily participated in the research.

Results

In this section, the research findings are obtained as a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the classroom teachers in the context of the research purpose, and questions are given.

Classroom Teachers' General Thoughts on Specific Days and Weeks

In the context of the first research question, it was tried to understand classroom teachers' perspectives on specific days and weeks and how they perceive these special days. The codes reflecting teachers' general thoughts about specific days and weeks are given in Figure 1.

When Figure 1 is examined, it is seen that the most emphasized point about specific days and weeks by teachers is sensitization to social events. They stated that many special days emphasized in the calendar year draw attention to social problems. T6's views on the subject are as follows:

When we talk about specific days and weeks, from time to time, we emphasize many problems such as protecting the natural environment, children's rights, animal protection, organ donation, which are our bleeding wounds in society. In this respect, I think it is important for children to do activities for these days in terms of both raising awareness of social problems and finding solutions to these problems.
(Teacher 6)

Another point emphasized by the teachers about specific days and weeks was that these special days contribute to national unity and solidarity. "When I think of specific days and weeks, I primarily think of activities that give a certain national consciousness. Whether it is our national holidays or national holidays, on these days we unite as a society and experience our national feelings intensely." T3 expressed that specific days and weeks are activities that provide national unity and solidarity. Similarly, T19 expressed his views as "Specific days and weeks are activities that provide national unity and solidarity not only for students but also for the whole nation and even the world".

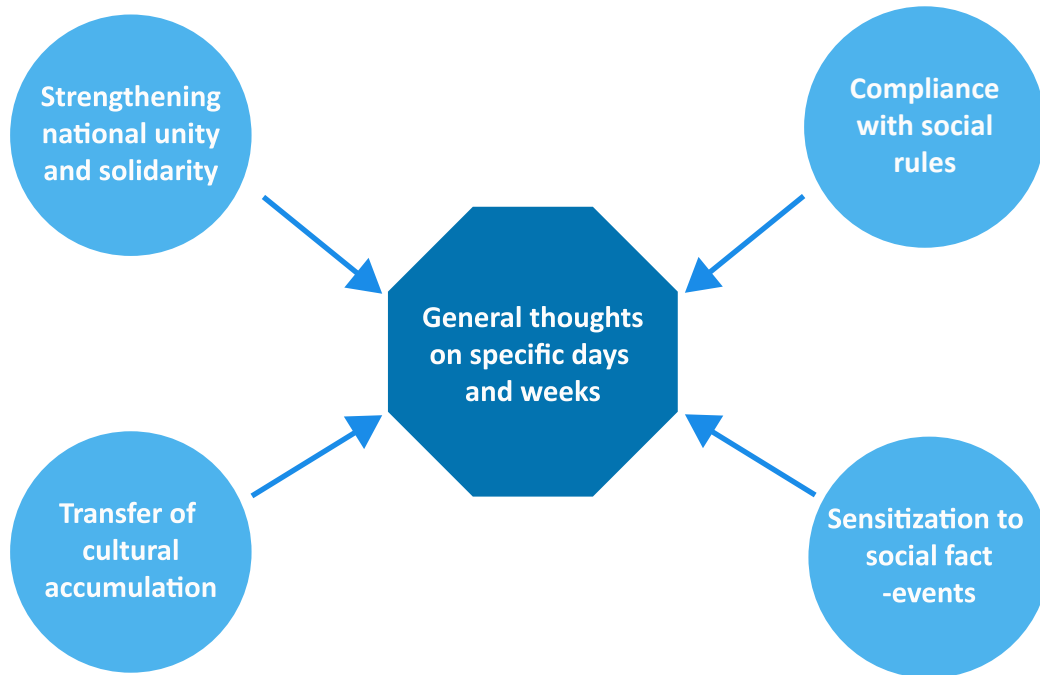
As a general idea about specific days and weeks, teachers stated that these days contribute to obeying social rules and gaining some social norms. The opinions of T2, who associates certain days and weeks with social rules, are as follows:

As a general idea, I think that certain days and weeks instill social rules in children. We often discuss in educational environments that children are degenerating in terms of values and that social traditions and norms have lost their importance. Certain days and weeks remind children of these degenerating norms and rules. (Teacher 2)



Figure 1

Teachers’ general thoughts on specific days and weeks



Similarly, the views of T14, who emphasized social rules of behavior and ethical values, are as follows: “Specific days and weeks concern the whole society. Because these times regulate the rules of behavior and ethical values of the society”. Another situation that teachers drew attention to in the context of general thoughts was the transfer of cultural accumulation. One of the participants, T11 stated that “Specific days and weeks are the transfer of the cultural elements that a nation and even the world humanity has created with the accumulation of years to future generations, and various activities are organized in schools in order for children to care about this cultural accumulation”.

Classroom Teachers’ Opinions on the Inclusion of Specific Days and Weeks in Life Science Textbooks

The codes obtained from teachers’ views on how specific days and weeks are covered in life science textbooks are presented in Figure 2.

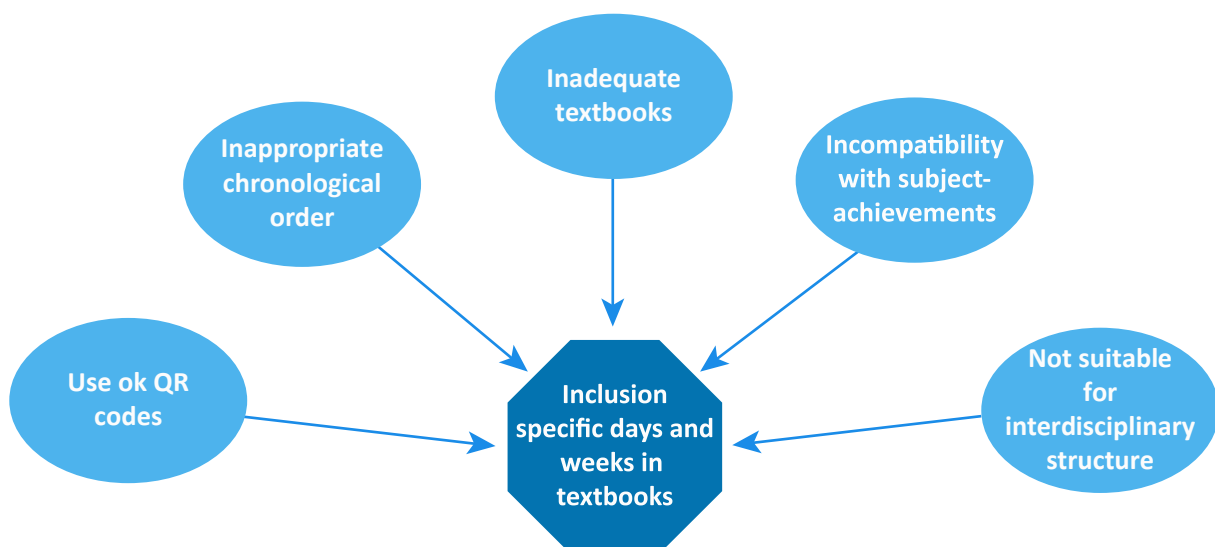
When the opinions of classroom teachers on the inclusion of specific days and weeks in life studies textbooks are analyzed, it is seen that five main emphases are made. The most frequently emphasized situation is that the life studies textbook is insufficient in terms of including specific days and weeks. The views of T18 on the subject are as follows: “We do not find any information about specific days and weeks in our textbook. When we look at

the annual plan of the course, there is a lot of information about the subject, but I do not understand why it is not reflected in the textbook at all.” T1, who shared a similar opinion, said “Textbooks are not enough. The specific days and weeks are indirect and very superficial. This shows that not enough importance is given in the books.” S12 also drew attention to the same issue and explained the inadequacy of the textbooks as follows:

I think the content in the book is not sufficient. If we say that our aim is to teach life science lesson, our aim should be to make students gain these. Because there are a lot of days with universal and national values in specific days and weeks. We should protect these values and emphasize them in the life sciences lesson. Unfortunately, the books do not reflect this importance. (Teacher 12)

Figure 2

Teachers’ opinions on the inclusion of specific days and weeks in life science textbooks



T4, who gave examples of some important specific days and weeks missing in the textbooks, expressed the inadequacy of the textbooks with the following words:

In the “Life at School” theme, which covers the month of September, activities related to the primary education week could have been placed here. Again, in the second theme, while the national struggle and Kemalism are expected, there is no activity in the “Life at Home” theme that touches on days such as Republic Day, Atatürk Week, Forest Week. The 3rd theme, “Healthy Life”, does not mention the days that need to raise awareness as of December. In this theme, the topic of being a conscious consumer was covered, but there was no activity related to the Domestic Goods Week. December 3rd Disability Week was not included as if it did not exist. Green Crescent Week was also ignored. While the theme of “Safe Life” was covered in January-February, February 9, Safe Internet Day was also ignored. As you can see, the teacher neglected certain days and weeks in the life science book. However, if free texts about the days that should be commemorated and celebrated in that month were placed at the end of each theme, if the existing theme texts were selected to cover these days and if awareness was created in students with 1-2 activities, the books would be much more nutritious. (Teacher 4)

Another point frequently emphasized by the teachers who expressed their opinions about the textbooks was the use of QR codes in the textbooks. T10, who stated that the QR codes in the life science textbook did not work, explained his views as follows:

There is a QR code in the book about specific days and weeks, and when you scan this code, you cannot access the relevant page. Actually, that QR code is supposed to direct us to EBA. I think this was not successful or there is a technical glitch but it could not be fixed. When we want to use it with students, we cannot use it for this reason. (Teacher 10)

The views of another participant T13, who stated that the QR code does not work in the books, are similar to T10:

A QR code is given for specific days and weeks. If this QR code escapes the eyes of fellow teachers, there are no activities that they can mention specific days and weeks. One day we tried to try it with the children in the classroom and nothing came out. Then, when I inquired from friends, it turned out that there were only QR codes and they didn't work either. (Teacher 13)

In line with the opinions of the participants, another striking situation about the textbooks is the lack of chronological order of the specific days and weeks and their incompatibility with the learning outcomes. The views of T14 on the subject are as follows: "The contents related to specific days and weeks do not follow a certain order in the books. There is no systematicity. The date of the day on which we explain the importance of the day is different from the date on which the subject is covered." Regarding the subject, T8 expressed his opinion as follows: "The subjects and achievements and the specific days and weeks are not parallel in terms of order. For example, while Primary Education Week and Atatürk Week are parallel, other weeks and important days may be irrelevant to the objectives of the textbook." Similarly, T4 drew attention to this incompatibility and supported his opinion with the following examples from the textbook:

The subject of "Republic and Kemalism", which should have been covered in October, was included in the March-April theme "Life in our country". Moreover, in March, the topic of July 15 was included instead of March 18, Çanakkale Martyrs' Remembrance Day, and March 18, one of the most important days of Turkish history, was ignored where it should be. (Teacher 4)

Another point emphasized by the teachers about the textbooks is that the textbooks do not provide an interdisciplinary structure related to specific days and weeks. The opinion of T5 on the subject is as follows: "It is difficult to find anything proper in the book. There is no interdisciplinary association anyway. It is a big deficiency." T2, who had a similar opinion, expressed his opinion as follows: "I also did not come across any interdisciplinary association that attracted my attention. Normally, textbooks give importance to interdisciplinary approach, but I can say that I came to the conclusion as if the textbook did not explain the specific days and weeks at all and did not establish a connection with the structure of life science."

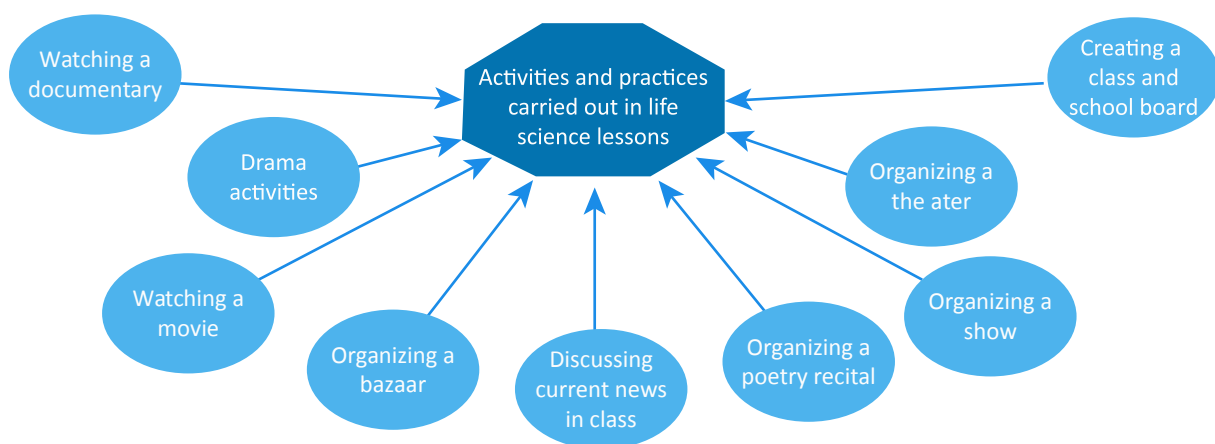
Classroom Teachers' Opinions on Activities and Practices in Life Science Lessons

Another issue examined within the scope of the research is to find out what kind of activities and practices classroom teachers carry out related to specific days and weeks in life studies

lessons. As can be seen in Figure 3, it was observed that teachers carried out practices related to specific days and weeks such as organizing theater, organizing bazaars, performing drama activities, organizing poetry recitals, creating classroom and school boards, organizing field trips, watching movies, and bringing current news to the classroom.

Figure 3

Teachers' views on the activities and practices they carry out in life science lessons



One of the practices frequently carried out by teachers related to specific days and weeks is to create school and classroom boards. Regarding the subject, T12 explained their activities as follows:

We decorate our class board together with our students. The children collect an article or visuals indicating the meaning and importance of the day. Sometimes we prepare them together and create our board with them. I think it is effective in grasping the meaning and importance of the day because children encounter that board for a while. (Teacher 12)

Another issue mentioned by teachers was the performances organized on national holidays. Many teachers stated that they contributed to the shows organized in the school garden on national holidays with their students. T13 expressed her opinion on the subject as follows: “We organize celebrations and dance performances on national holidays. We also have activities in the school garden or in our classroom on various commemoration days.” Similarly, T15 expressed his views as follows: “There are activities such as our national holidays that should be celebrated by the school. We organize activities in the garden with a large group of people all together. We celebrate with various poems, dances and shows in our school garden.”

Another practice of the participants was to show videos such as movies, documentaries and animations related to specific days and weeks. Teachers stated that they used these kinds of videos in the classroom to emphasize the meaning and importance of the day. T7’s opinion on the subject was as follows: “I use movies and short videos very often in the classroom. Because it attracts children’s attention. For example, there was a short movie about the

acceptance of the National Anthem in third grade. Again, we recently watched a very nice animated movie about Koca Seyit, the hero of Çanakkale.” Another practice carried out by teachers is organizing theater. The opinion of T2 on the subject is as follows: “I organize theater activities for my students, including some special weeks and days. First, we have a study and preparation process. Then we exhibit our play with the participation of our parents.” Some participants stated that they organized drama activities and poetry recitals related to specific days and weeks. Regarding these activities, T12’s opinion was as follows: “We have the opportunity to act out a sample event related to the day we are dealing with in the classroom, to bring live objects or models to the classroom to attract more attention of the students.”

T20, one of the participants, stated that bazaar activities arouse interest especially on some days such as the local goods week. T20’s opinion on the subject is as follows:

Among the activities I do, my students like bazaars the most. For this reason, when I start the bazaar work in every activity, I choose enthusiastic parents and students from other classes. There is a distribution of tasks among us, who will prepare what. Then we combine them all and exhibit them in our bazaar. When we did it for the local product, we received very good feedback from both parents, students and other teachers. (Teacher 20)

Another practice carried out by teachers is to bring news about specific days and weeks to the classroom. Regarding the subject, T17 stated the following opinion:

I follow the agenda and news closely. If there is a current news about the days we celebrate on certain days and weeks, if something catches my eye, I talk about it in the classroom that week. We discuss it together with the children. When you ask for an example, for example, there was a news article about Istanbul’s water problem, and then an expert said that Turkey is becoming a desert and will be a country with a serious water problem in 20 years. Since it was World Water Day, I shared this news with the children in the classroom and we talked about whether they use water sparingly. (Teacher 17)

Classroom Teachers’ Opinions on the Problems They Encountered While Teaching Specific Days and Weeks

As can be seen in Figure 4, the participants drew attention to some problems while carrying out activities related to specific days and weeks in life science lessons.

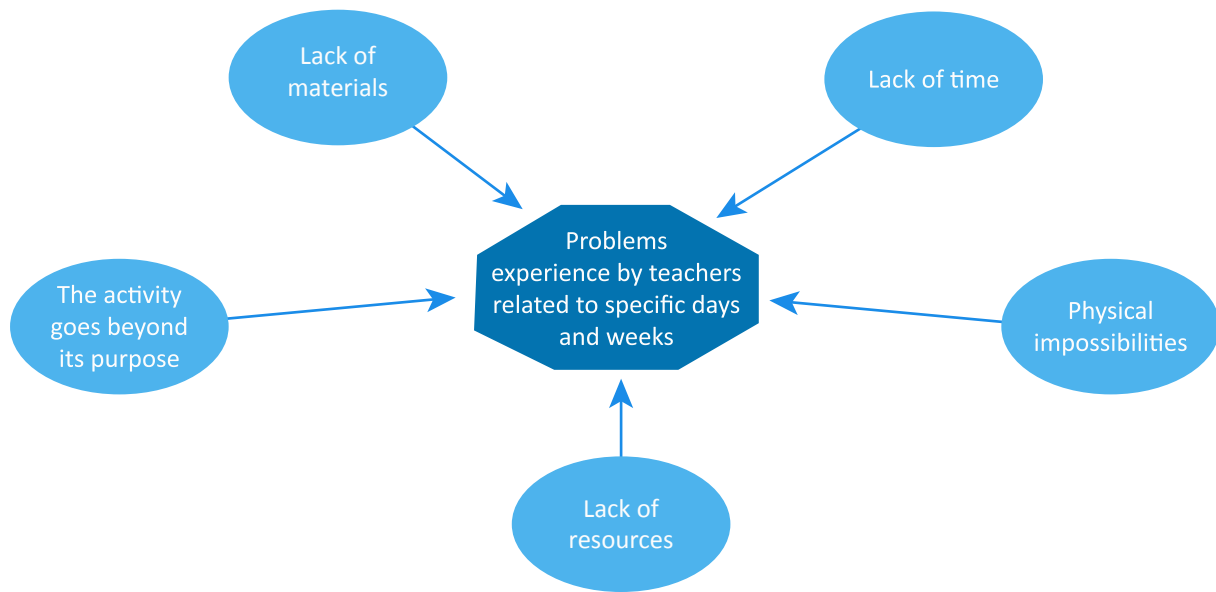
One of the main problems faced by teachers is lack of time. The thoughts of T17, who had difficulty in allocating time for activities related to specific days and weeks, are as follows:

The biggest problem I have is the lack of time. Ceremonies or celebrated programs usually have to be held between classes. This forces children to celebrate that day compulsorily. When it is forced, students do not have enough enthusiasm and enthusiasm. (Teacher 17)



Figure 4

Teachers' opinions on the problems they face regarding specific days and weeks



Another participant T5, who stated that he had time anxiety, expressed his opinion as follows: “The programs are kept short due to the concern that the lesson will end or the subjects will not be completed. When you do it for the sake of doing it, it does not make much sense.” Another problem mentioned by the teachers is physical impossibilities. T8’s opinion on the subject is as follows: “Since there is no smart board in my classroom, I cannot implement many of my activities in the classroom. For this reason, the teaching of specific days and weeks remains abstract for the students. This makes my job difficult. For example, I would like to show a movie on the subject.” The opinions of T6, who emphasized the physical inadequacies in the school, are as follows:

Generally, there is not much of a problem with in-class activities. This is because the class teacher can talk about the day according to its importance and do activities. There are more problems in school-wide activities. In school-wide activities, seasonal conditions can negatively affect the activities to be held as a result of the lack of a hall where the activities will be organized and the activity is held in the school garden. (Teacher 6)

Some participants stated that negative situations were experienced because the activities related to specific days and weeks went beyond their purpose. The views of T9 on the subject are as follows:

I can say that some specific days and weeks are unnecessary. For example, celebrating Mother’s Day is an unnecessary celebration because a mother cannot have a day. While celebrating this day, orphaned children without mothers are forgotten in the classroom. A second example is the domestic goods week. Domestic goods week has also turned into an event that is celebrated outside of its purpose, it is wrong to celebrate the cake bought from the bakery and kiwi, banana, etc. bought from the greengrocer as domestic goods week. Of course, there are days and weeks that will be useful if the concepts that serve their real purpose are emphasized. (Teacher 9)

Another situation stated by the participants as a problem is the insufficiency of resources and materials. T5 stated that he had a shortage of resources and materials as follows: “When we look at the book, it is completely empty. The lack of source materials such as a text, picture, activity that will contribute to the lesson causes problems.” Similarly, T2’s views are as follows: “Okay, maybe not for all of them, but at least there should be content in the textbooks for certain days and weeks that we consider indispensable. National Education can provide various materials and resources for teachers in this regard.”

Classroom Teachers’ Suggestions for More Effective Processing of Specific Days and Weeks

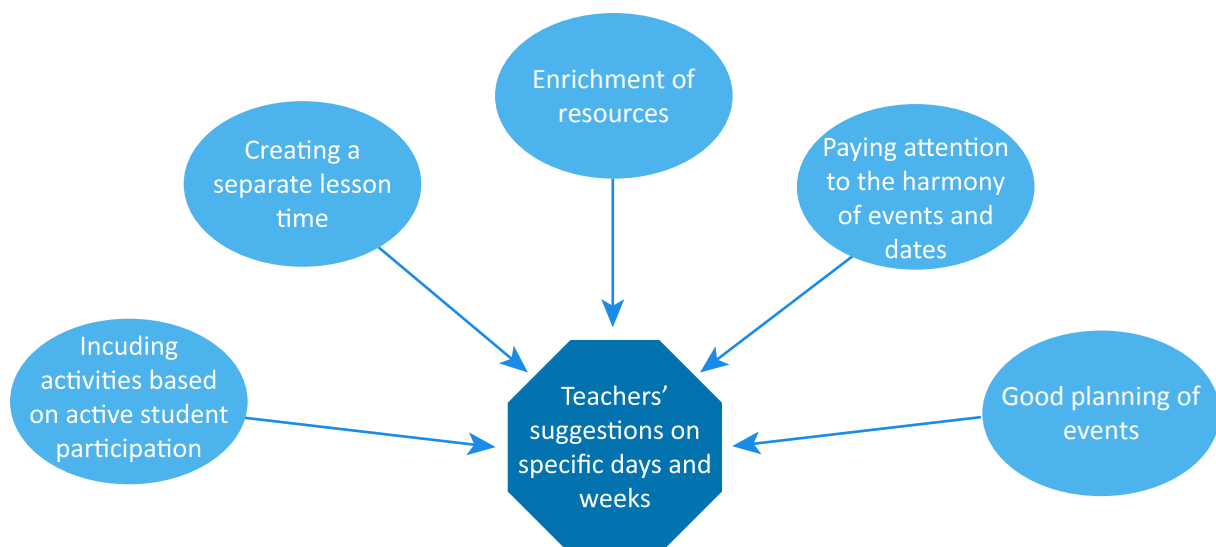
The suggestions offered by classroom teachers for more effective teaching of specific days and weeks in life studies lessons are presented in Figure 5.

As can be seen in Figure 5, teachers suggested enriching the resources, creating a separate lesson time for specific days and weeks, planning the activities organized within the scope of specific days and weeks well, ensuring that the dates of the activities and specific days and weeks are compatible, and conducting activities based on active participation. One of the suggestions emphasized by the teachers is to increase the resources that can be used on specific days and weeks. The opinion of T5 on the subject is as follows:

As I said before, resources are insufficient. Our ministry can prepare activities, visual studies, videos and animations, interviews about specific days and weeks. I think it would be better in terms of accessibility, saving time and unity across the country. In this way, very high quality content will be produced. (Teacher 5)

Figure 5

Teachers’ suggestions for specific days and weeks in life science lessons



Another suggestion expressed by the teachers was to create a separate class hour for activities related to specific days and weeks. T4 stated “A separate lesson time can be allocated in the curriculum for the celebration of specific days and weeks. This can increase the importance of these days.” Similarly, T5’s opinion is as follows: “In addition, in order to facilitate the celebrations and to avoid congestion in terms of time, one lesson hour per week should be changed as a specific days and weeks hour.”

Participants drew attention to the importance of a good planning beforehand in order for the activities for specific days and weeks to be more efficient. T3 expressed an opinion on the subject:

First of all, the school administration and teachers should plan very well in the first week when the schools open or during the seminars. Which event on which date is already known in advance. When you leave it to the last minute and try to do something in a hurry, it is both challenging for the teacher and not productive for the students. The activities should be planned in advance, on time and with an emphasis on spreading them throughout the school. (Teacher 3)

The harmonization of the dates of activities and specific days and weeks is another issue suggested by the participants. T6, who stated that this harmony should be ensured, said, “Specific days and weeks should be celebrated on their own date and time. It should be included in the books in this way. But you see that they are always different subjects on different dates.” Similarly, T17 said, “It is necessary to arrange the dates well. Because these days are meaningful when they are celebrated on their own day and date. For this reason, these dates should also be taken into consideration when organizing the topics in the textbook.”

Another suggestion of the participants on the subject was to organize in-class activities based on active student participation related to specific days and weeks. The opinion of one of the participants T11 on the subject is as follows:

The activities that students do by coming from within, by making their own efforts are also very important. I have seen this all these years, when we talk about specific days and weeks, we should not immediately think of ceremonies and forced celebrations in the school yard. We teachers have a big job here. We can do activities in the classroom for students to better understand the importance of these days. There can be games, drama activities, discussions about the meaning and importance of that day in the classroom. Otherwise, it becomes a compulsion when the child does not do anything on his/her own. (Teacher 11)

Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

As a result of the research, it was determined that teachers found specific days and weeks important in terms of strengthening national unity and solidarity, ensuring the transfer of cultural accumulation, students’ adaptation to social rules, and gaining sensitivity to social events. In the study, it was concluded that teachers found life science textbooks inadequate in terms of reflecting specific days and weeks. Teachers stated that the QR codes placed in the textbooks for specific days and weeks did not work. The fact that these QR codes do not work in textbooks, which are seen as the most basic source, is a matter of discussion. In addition, not giving enough space to specific days and weeks in textbooks may prevent

students from learning about their culture, history, and important days. Students may not fully grasp their social responsibilities and values in this case. It also creates a situation that may cause students to be less aware of national and universal events. Students may have difficulty remembering important days or may not fully grasp the meaning of these days. Batmaz (2022) also states in his study that life science textbooks are deficient in terms of reflecting specific days and weeks and that specific days and weeks should be given more space in textbooks. The fact that specific days and weeks are not sufficiently included in the life studies textbook may complicate teachers' lesson planning process. Teachers may need additional materials to emphasize specific days and weeks. Keskin and Kuru (2018) emphasized a similar situation in their study and drew attention to the fact that textbooks are deficient in specific days and weeks. Çevik (2013) draws attention to the importance of specific days and weeks in understanding the importance of local and universal social events. Karaman (2010) stated in his research that specific days and weeks increase loyalty to national values, respect for our past, love, and respect for our homeland, and give the new generation a sense of responsibility through emotional bonding. Göçer (2004), on the other hand, concluded that activities related to specific days and weeks help students gain habits such as taking responsibility, working, and setting goals. Similarly, Şişman and Küçük (2011) stated that activities related to specific days and weeks, especially ceremonies held for national holidays, have an important share in strengthening the concepts of national consciousness and national unity in students.

As a result of the research, it was seen that classroom teachers attach importance to specific days and weeks. Similar to the research result, Kurtdede Fidan (2017) states in his research that celebrating certain days and weeks enables students to acquire values such as national spirit and identity, patriotism, and brotherhood. For this reason, he states that the value of celebrations for specific days and weeks should be recognized. In Öztürk's (2014) study, teachers stated that activities related to specific days and weeks are organized in schools and that the activities help students socialize and develop a sense of responsibility and taking responsibility in students. In Şiringel's (2006) study, teachers stated that students adopt the concepts of homeland and nation through specific days and weeks and that these concepts develop through activities. Elgenius (2011) emphasizes that individuals' participation in ceremonies such as the liberation and independence days of countries enables them to gain a sense of social unity and partnership. Lubbers and Meuleman (2016) state that national celebrations and commemorations have an impact on strengthening national bonds.

As a result of the research, it was determined that classroom teachers carried out activities such as organizing theater, performing drama activities, organizing poetry recitals, and watching movies in life studies lessons within the scope of specific days and weeks. Similar results were found in the study conducted by Göçer (2004). In his study, Göçer (2004) stated that teachers used activities such as writing, poetry, eloquence, plays, monologues, and drama related to specific days and weeks. Kurtdede and Fidan (2017) concluded in their study that classroom teachers mostly used poetry-reading activities related to specific days and weeks. In addition to this, Kurtdede and Fidan (2017) concluded that they benefit from activities such as using drama techniques in celebrations, writing compositions/stories, painting studies/exhibitions, making presentations, organizing competitions, making use of

trips, preparing posters, songs, preparing panels, making visits and planting trees (Kurtdele Fidan, 2017).

As a result of the research, it was seen that there were problems such as the lack of sufficient materials in the classrooms, physical impossibilities in schools, and the celebrations going beyond their purpose. Gültekin (2007) reached similar results in his research. It was stated that students could not comprehend the importance of these days sufficiently due to trivial reasons such as time, place, and course content by not paying enough attention to certain days and weeks that increase sensitivity through national feelings and some social events. Teachers offered suggestions such as conducting activities based on active student participation, allocating a separate class hour, increasing the variety of resources, and realizing the activities in accordance with the date of the specific day and week in order to effectively realize the activities for specific days and weeks in life studies lessons.

Based on the research findings, the following suggestions can be made:

- Life science textbooks should be prepared to include activities and content related to specific days and weeks.
- Teachers should be provided with various materials and resources for more effective teaching of specific days and weeks in classrooms.
- Schools' physical facilities should be improved for activities related to specific days and weeks.
- Course outcomes should be associated with specific days and weeks and date mismatches should be eliminated.
- School administrations and teachers should carry out large-scale activities for specific days and weeks in a well-planned manner.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) declared that this study has received no financial support.

References

- Batmaz, O. (2022). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin gözünden hayat bilgisi ders kitapları. *Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 20(2), 342-367.
- Bozak, A., & Özdemir, T. (2011). İlköğretim okullarında görev yapan öğretmenlerin belirli gün ve hafta kutlamalarına ilişkin görüşleri. *Çağdaş Eğitim Dergisi*, 36(383), 26-33.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. California, Sage.
- Çevik, H. (2013). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin ilköğretim okullarında kutlanan belirli gün ve haftalara ilişkin görüşlerinin değerlendirilmesi. [Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi]. YÖK Tez Merkezi.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Elgenius, G. (2011). The politics of recognition: Symbols, nation building and rival nationalisms. *Nations and Nationalism*, 17(2), 396-418.
- Göçer, A. (2004). Türkçe öğretimine bir uygulama sahası olarak belirli günler ve haftaların kutlama etkinlikleri. *Milli Eğitim*, 32(162), 126-135.
- Gültekin, M. (2007). İlköğretim öğretmenlerinin ilköğretimde kutlanan belirli gün ve haftaların gerekliliği ve işe vurukluğu konusundaki görüşleri: Eskişehir ili örneği. *Millî Eğitim Üç Aylık Eğitim ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 174, 72-87.
- Gürdal, A., Şimşek, Ö., & Üredi, L. (1998). İlköğretim okullarında belirli gün ve haftaların kutlanmasının eğitim öğretime katkısı. VII. Ulusal Eğitim Bilimleri Kongresi Bildiri Metinleri. Selçuk Üniversitesi, 1, 753-759.
- Karaman, K. (2010). Ritüellerin toplumsal etkileri. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 10(21), 227-236.
- Keskin, H., & Kuru, G. (2018). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin hayat bilgisi dersinde kutlanan veya anılan belirli gün ve haftalara ilişkin görüşleri. *İnönü Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 19(2), 226-239.
- Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Kurtdede Fidan, N. (2017). Belirli gün ve haftaların değerler eğitimine katkısına ilişkin sınıf öğretmenlerinin görüşleri. *Pegem Eğitim ve Öğretim Dergisi*, 7(2), 287-312.

- Lubbers, M., & Meuleman R. (2016). Participation in national celebrations and commemorations: The role of socialization and nationalism in the Dutch context. *Social Science Research*, 55, 111-121.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. New Jersey, Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (2009). *Hayat bilgisi dersi öğretim programı*. Ankara: Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı.
- Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (2018). *Hayat bilgisi dersi öğretim programı*. Ankara: Talim Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı.
- Morgan, H. (2022). Conducting a qualitative document analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(1), 64-77.
- Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative research and evaluation and methods (3rd ed.)*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Şiringel, N. (2006). Sosyal bilgiler ve Türkçe öğretmenlerinin ilköğretim 6. ve 7. Sınıfta belirli gün ve haftalara ilişkin görüşlerinin değerlendirilmesi. [Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Çukurova Üniversitesi]. YÖK Tez Merkezi.
- Şişman, M. ve Küçük, M. (2011). Okul törenleri ritüel yeri olarak okul. Pegem Akademi.