ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Opinions of Classroom Teachers on the Adequacy of the Social Studies Curriculum in terms of Gaining 21st Century Skills

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Ethical Statement

Consent form was obtained from the participants. Ethical board approval was granted.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest is present in the conduction or the reporting of this study.

ABSTRACT

Along with the impact of the 21st century skills that the new world projection focuses on, the definition of the qualified individual and the view of him/her has started to differentiate. In this context, it is important to identify which skills are considered more significant by new generations and which skills are needed. The aim of this study is to determine the opinions of classroom teachers about the adequacy of the Social Studies Curriculum in terms of gaining 21st century skills. In accordance with the purpose of the research, case study method, one of the qualitative research methods, was used and the data were collected with a semi-structured focus group interview form prepared by the researchers. In the research, it was concluded that information, communication and media skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the frameworks were stated as the most important skills in the program, while responsibility, entrepreneurship and productivity skills classified as life skills were not recognized by the participants. In addition, it was concluded that the Social Studies Curriculum was not found to be sufficient by classroom teachers in terms of providing 21st century skills and that the curriculum should be improved.

Keywords: 21st Century Skills, Social Studies Curriculum, Classroom Teachers

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INTRODUCTION

Education practices, which should carry the changes and transformations in societies to development, can be interrupted for various reasons. Since the 2010s, Industry 4.0 applications for educational applications have started to attract attention. With this awareness, efforts to reduce interrupted processes have gained momentum. It has been seen that these efforts affect the educational paradigm, its purpose, the programs used and the process rapidly. The education provided to individuals globally has become more important than ever to continuous and lifelong learning in order to adapt to change and maintain a quality life.

Courses that make lifelong learning sustainable provide students with the necessary skills. The foundation of these skills is established from an early age, starting from the primary school period. For this reason. Education programs must be prepared in a way to equip all individuals with 21st century skills appropriate to their responsibilities. Considering that we are in a period in which accepting information as it is, without examining it, has become invalid, it is important to raise individuals in a way that they can use high-level thinking skills, be entrepreneurial, productive and adapt to innovations. These skills, which are advocated to be possessed by individuals, are called 21st century skills (P21, 2019).

According to the conditions of the period, prominent skills/skill sets were created in each period or century (Hamarat, 2019). The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), is an organization that stands out with its work on 21st century competencies and skills. The 21st century skills framework put forward by this organization has been the most widely studied and widely accepted framework in the literature. The framework was categorized under three themes. The 21st century skills framework is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. 21st century skills framework

Learning and Regeneration Skills	*Information, Media and Technology Skills*	*Life and Career Skills*
Creativity	Information Literacy	Information Literacy
Innovation	Media Literacy	Media Literacy
Critical Thinking	Information and Communication Technologies Literacy	Information and Communication Technologies Literacy
Problem Solving	Information Literacy	Information Literacy
Communication and Collaboration	Media Literacy	Media Literacy
Learning and Regeneration	Information and Communication Technologies Literacy	

21st Century Skills Partnership, (2019).

Efforts should be made in schools to acquire the listed skills from an early age. In this context, we can exemplify the social studies course as the basic course we encounter in primary schools as the appropriate ground for the acquisition of skills. Social Studies is a course that supports the holistic development of children as they start primary school. Therefore, it has a structure that includes other disciplines and branches of science. Considering that the

focus of the social studies course is experience-based, it becomes clear that its range is in a way that can reflect many features of life experience.

While Sönmez (2016), describes the Social Studies course, which takes place in the first three years of primary school, as a process of establishing a connection with social reality; Karabağ (2009) & Baysal (2006), described this course as a curriculum that prepares individuals for the conditions of life and aims to raise good individuals. They also emphasized that in line with the stated objectives, the Social Studies Curriculum prepares individuals for higher education and creates a base for the second phase courses.

Since the 1926 Primary School Program, the Social Studies course, which has been accepted as the central course, has a different importance compared to other courses because it is the focal point of the first semester courses in primary school and the basis of the second semester courses. (Sabancı & Şahin, 2005).

The Ministry of National Education revised the draft program that it had created in 2017 and put it in force in 2018. When the updates in 2018 were examined, it was determined that the main purpose of the program is *"to raise individuals who have the basic skills to survive in daily life, recognize their personality traits, live a healthy and safe life, internalize the values of the society they live in, are sensitive to nature and the environment, research, produce and love their country"* (The Ministry of National Education, 2018).

In the 2018 Life Science Curriculum, skills are introduced as basic life skills, but courses such as life skills and lifelong learning are not mentioned. In this program, skills are explained at once as knowledge, skills and values in the areas where achievements are given according to grade levels. The basic life skills included in the 2018 curriculum are listed in Table 2 (The Ministry of National Education, 2018).

Table 2. Basic Life Skills

Research	Obeying the Rules	Raising Career Awareness
Problem Solving	Sensing Place	Self-Protection
Using Information and Communication Technologies	Making Decision Management	Nature Conservation
Perception of Change and Continuity	Social Participation	Time
Balanced Nutrition	National and Cultural Values	Cooperation
Observation	Self-Care	

Teachers have the biggest role in helping individuals acquire the 21st century skills. In the near future, it is predicted that today's children will be faced with occupations that they have not even heard of, and that existing occupations will disappear, depending on technological developments. In this likely situation, countries will need to review their education systems and teacher competencies and engage in technology-based solutions in education. Teachers' professional competencies and attitudes towards technology gain great importance in achieving the goals of technology-supported reform efforts that need to be realized in education systems (Karadeniz, 2019).

In the 21st century, considering the skills that individuals should acquire, it is thought that the objectives of the Life Science course have an important place in acquiring these skills starting from the first stage of primary education. In addition, the fact that the Social Studies course in primary education is taken as the center and other courses are

taught by forming an interest and connection on the axis of this course reveals the importance of the study.

The fact that all of the programs developed since the declaration of the Republic to the present day include the Social Studies course clearly reveals the importance of this course in forming the child's life. The aim of the research is to identify the reflection of 21st century skills in the Social Studies Curriculum by getting the opinions of classroom teachers. The sub-problems formed within the framework of the main goal are listed below.

1. How is the state of awareness of classroom teachers about 21st century skills?
2. What are the opinions of classroom teachers about developing 21st century skills?
3. What are the in-class and out-of-class practices used by classroom teachers to develop 21st century skills in the Social Studies course?
4. What are the opinions of classroom teachers about the problems faced during the practice of 21st century skills in the Social Studies course?
5. What are the suggestions of classroom teachers regarding the development of 21st century skills in the acquisition, content, learning-teaching processes and assessment parts of the Social Studies Curriculum?

METHOD

In this research, case study design, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used to collect data for the purpose of the research. Case study is a qualitative research method in which the researcher collects detailed information about real life, existing finite system or multiple restricted systems through observations, interviews, documents over a certain period of time and thus creates a situation (Creswell, 2020).

If the research seeks to answer a descriptive or explanatory question or emphasizes the importance of examining phenomena in real-world settings, it would be more appropriate to collect data from natural settings rather than a structure based on derived data. In these situations, the case study is the best option for research (Yin, 2017, pp. 4-5). Since there was only one program and one unit of analysis in the research, a holistic single case design was used.

Setting and Participants

The study group consisted of 11 classroom teachers working in public and private schools in Balıkesir-Bandırma district in the 2020-2021 academic year. One of the classroom teachers in the study group could not participate due to technical problems.

Table 3. Participant profile

Document Name	Gender	Professional Experience	Education	Type of School
P1	Male	39 Years	Bachelor's Degree	Private School
P2	Female	32 Years	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
P3	Female	31 Years	School of Education	Public School
P4	Female	32 Years	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
P5	Male	16 Years	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
P6	Female	15 Years	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
P7	Female	33 Years	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
P8	Female	8 Years	Bachelor's Degree	Private School
P9	Male	18 Years	Bachelor's Degree	Public School
P10	Male	11 Years	Bachelor's Degree	Public School

When Table 3 above is analyzed, it is understood that 8 of the 10 interviewed teachers work in public schools and 2 of them work in private schools. Other results related to the profile of the participants are also presented in Table 3.

Data Analysis

Focus group interview, one of the data collection techniques, was used in the study. A focus group interview is a data collection technique that aims to collect data interactively with a limited number of participants with common characteristics and a moderator, with no need for participants to hide their statements (Gülcan, 2021). A semi-structured interview form was prepared by the researcher to reach the data to be obtained in the research.

 Criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling types, was selected for the research. As a criterion, participants were required to have at least 5 years of professional experience and to have taught Social Studies in at least two different grade levels. As a result of this criterion, eleven classroom teachers were selected and two focus groups were formed. Attention was paid to the heterogeneous distribution of each group. Since one participant stated that he/she could not participate due to technical reasons, the interview was conducted with ten participants.

Initially, the content of the interviews was transcribed. Transcripts were imported into MAXQDA 2020. In the analysis of the data transferred to the MAXQDA 2020 program, a specific to general approach was adopted. The first codes were created by reading the data several times. The codes related to each other were combined under themes and named. Then, the themes gathered were expressed in plain language. Lastly, the researcher interpreted the results and supported them with various visuals in order to give meaning to the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was categorized under 4 topics. These are; Opinions on 21st Century Skills Qualification, Opinions on

the Content of the Social Studies Program in the 21st Century, Methods Used to Develop 21st Century Skills, Problems in the Process of Acquiring 21st Century Skills. Topics are illustrated in Diagram 1.
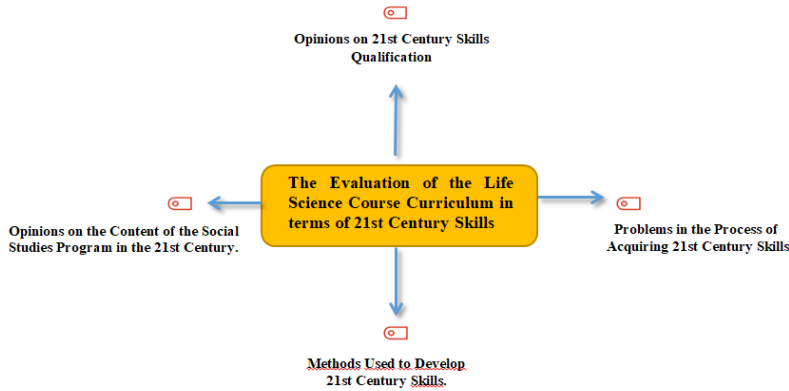
Diagram 1. Presentation of the topics related to the examination of the opinions of classroom teachers on the effectiveness of the social studies curriculum in terms of gaining 21st century skills.

The model of the opinions on the 21st century skills qualifications, which is the first topic of the research, is shown in Diagram 2. Opinions on the qualifications of 21st century skills were analyzed under 2 sub-themes. These categories are information, media and technology skills and learning and innovation skills.
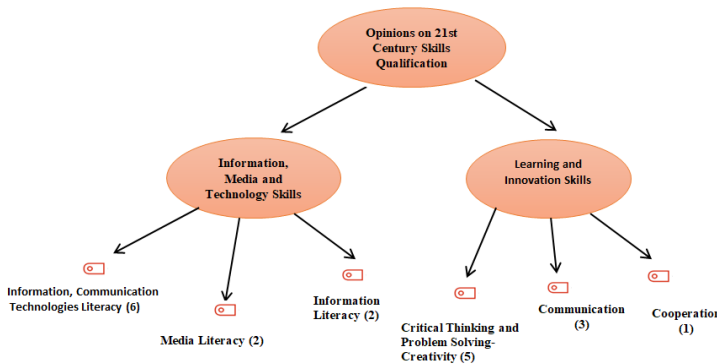
Diagram 2. Opinions on the qualifications of 21st century skills

Participants emphasized that technology is in the foreground along with the 21st century and this technological environment has increased even more with the pandemic, so it is necessary to teach information communication technologies literacy, media literacy and information literacy to students. The opinions of the participants on the

subject are given below:

"We can see that technology is more on the top of the agenda. We also witnessed this in online education during the pandemic. In Social Studies, we realized that even teachers who did not know it in this century have access to many programs.... Therefore, we should start to impose technology and the programs it brings with it in the first place." (P6)

"When we think of 21st century skills, what comes to mind immediately is technology, using technological products more. Here is online education during the pandemic. I want everyone to use the tools they need, such as tablets and computers." (P7)

"When we consider 21st century skills, the skills related to technology and media literacy come to the foreground first." (P10)

"It is necessary to prepare the substructure on how to access data and information in digital work... Therefore, before comprehending 21st century skills, we as teachers need to learn the perception of 21st century children. We need to know at what level they are. Then we will start to guide them. The main issue is to teach them how to access information in a safe and secure way in the digital environment. I think this should be included in Social Studies courses." (P1)

The second category, learning and regeneration skills, was identified with 3 categories: critical thinking and problem solving/creativity, communication and collaboration. Participants' views on the subject are as below:

"I think that courses such as creative and critical thinking should be integrated with these courses and taught to students in this way. ... 21st century skills should actually consist of these...." (P4)

"...From what I have understood and heard so far, the point that overlaps with the 21st century skills is communication. Students can use skills such as speaking, presentation and communication skills because they have 21st century skills." (P9)

"Being able to think critically, bringing different perspectives to questions, finding different solutions to a problem in a collaborative environment, expressing oneself with self-confidence by thinking critically, creativity, problem solving skills in general in different ways." (P8)
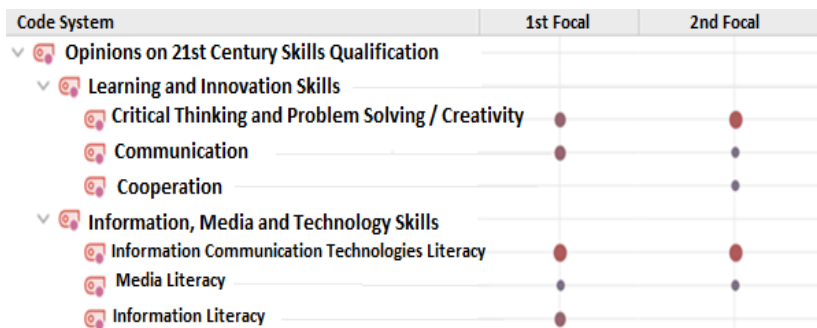

**Diagram 3.** Participants' Opinions on the Qualifications of 21st Century Skills

The model of the second topic of the research, "Opinions on the 21st Century Skills in the Content of the Social Studies Curriculum", is shown in Diagram 4. Participants' views on the content of the Social Studies Curriculum in the 21st century were expressed with 8 codes: activating the student/practical practices, changing the curriculum,

improvement of teacher skills, study on information access and evaluation, physical/social environment effects, information on the student's life skills, high class size, student's self-awareness study/ability to question.
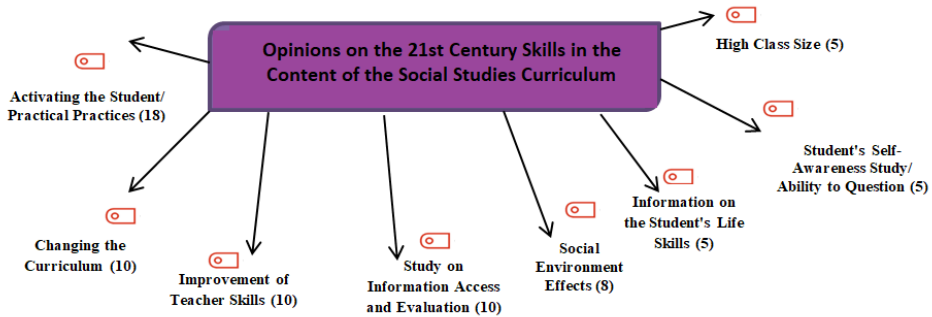
Diagram 4. The Code Model for the Theme of Opinions on 21st Century Skills in the Content

The code expressed intensively by the participants is the code of activating the student/practical practices. Participants expressed that the learning objectives in the Social Studies course were inadequate to develop 21st century skills. Participants expressed that the content of the Social Studies course makes students passive, is based on memorization and abstract knowledge, and that gains in Social Studies can be acquired through socialization.

"... Programs are more rote. For a few years, innovative movements have started slowly, even if only for show, but I think it is not complete..." (P7)

"... I think Social Studies means means to be interwined be intertwined with life. Children should learn by doing, living, seeing and traveling. It should be such a program. We try to put children in the classroom and try to teach them with the curriculum.... As I said, social studies should be taught by doing, living and having fun in every way." (P3)

The other code that was expressed intensively by the participants was the code of changing the curriculum. Participants reported that the Social Studies curriculum is not suitable for developing 21st century skills and that curriculum should be simplified and content should be presented in the context of social life and technological developments.

"I consider that the curriculums should be simplified. I think that the necessary courses should be added to provide 21st century skills... Are there any changes in the curriculum? No. The curriculum should be constantly updated according to the conditions in the country, according to the developing conditions. Children should be taken more seriously and realized that they are very smart and the curriculum should be prepared accordingly..." (P4)

"...more concise rather than more outcomes and topics, I mean, as teachers, we are always running around, even when we are doing things, we inevitably get involved in completing those objectives and writing in accordance to the curriculums. What we always say is, wouldn't it be better to be a little more concise in the books..." (P6)

The other code that was expressed intensively by the participants was the code of the improvement of teacher

skills. Participants stated that in order to transfer 21st century skills to students, first of all, teacher skills, meaning, perception and the ability to understand and transfer students should be updated according to the 21st century period.

"... (S)He said that teachers need to change primarily. I think so too." (P1)

"... If it is the teacher and the parent who will lead the student to the truth, both of them should have internalized the 21st century skills well so that they can provide them to the student well." (P9)

The other codes expressed by the participants were information access and evaluation, physical/social environmental effects, and high-class size, respectively.

"So, we cannot do the following. Unfortunately, educators are not consulted much when developing programs in the country. I mean, they don't consult the people in the field much.... I think that instead of forcing the student to constantly search encyclopedias in libraries, I think it would be more productive to teach him/her how to access the the correct information information on the internet and where he/she can access the the correct information information technologically in a short time, rather than forcing the child to go to libraries on the other hand..." (P4)

"...it's not only about the teachers... I strongly agree with Participant 3. Parents push the child through the door, take the child, it's yours, the rest is none of our business, they say. When the child needs help in any way, whether it is for homework or lessons, from whom will the child ask for this help? These people (s)he will ask for help are at different levels. I don't think a family that doesn't even make eye contact when talking to the child can have any idea about what that child is going through or will go through. So what is happening here? It is not only the student who is in the Social Studies course. It would be right to add a program such as 'how do we reconcile them'... I mean, Social Studies should not be between the teacher and the student." (P1)

"After learning about high-quality children's books, I realized how careful we need to be even while reading a story, and that high-quality children's books are actually a tool for questioning, that is, for philosophy. In other words, you can philosophize with children using another tool, you don't need to use high-quality children's books, you can come up with another topic, we can philosophize with that too. Of course, we can change the tools in philosophy with children, but in this training given to our teachers, high-quality children's books were used. Because high-quality children's books also attract children's attention. An incident happens there, then you let it go and the children philosophize on the subject in their own way, or criticize it, question why it happened the way it did." (P2)

Diagram 5 shows that different participants concentrated on different points, the size and color changes of the points. When we look at Diagram 5, the 1st focus group made more statements in the topic of their opinions on the content of the Social Studies Curriculum in the 21st century. In Diagram 6, while Focus Group 1 made intensive statements about the codes of activating students/practical practices and studies on information access and evaluation, Focus Group 2 made intensive statements about the code of activating students/practical practices.

Code System	1st Focal	2nd Focal
Opinions on the Content of the Social Studies Program in the 21st Century		
Activating the Student / Practical Practices	●	●
Changing the Curriculum	●	●
Improvement of Teacher Skills	●	●
Study on Information Access and Evaluation	●	·
Social Environment Effects	●	·
Information on the Student's Life Skills	●	
High Class Size	●	
Student's Self-Awareness Study/ Ability to Question	●	

Diagram 5. Participants' opinions on the 21st century skills in the content of social studies curriculum

The code model for the third topic of the study, the methods used in acquiring 21st century skills, is shown in Diagram 6. The theme of the methods used by the participants to acquire 21st century skills was expressed with 5 codes: experience gaining, secondary generation devices/education platforms, encouragement to learn/research, teaching rules and technique of drama.

Diagram 6. Code model for the topic of methods used in acquiring 21st century skills
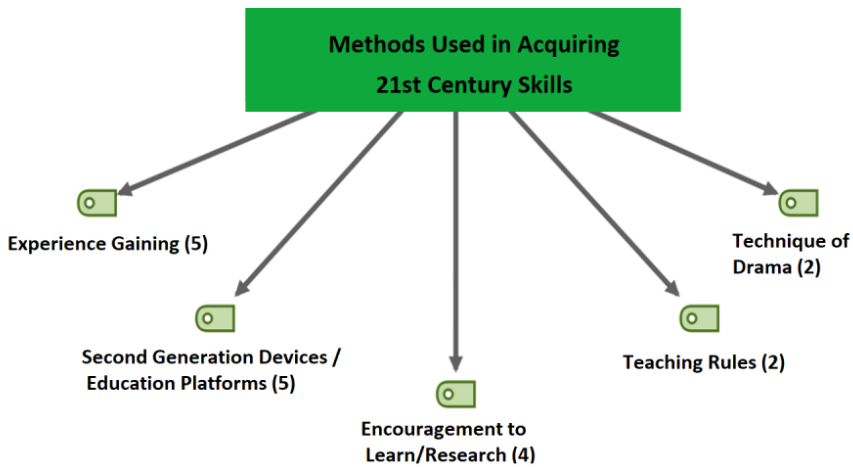

Diagram 6. Code model for the topic of methods used in acquiring 21st century skills

The codes most frequently mentioned by the participants were experience gaining, code second generation devices/education platforms, encouragement to learn/research, teaching rules and drama.

"We did a lot of museum visits in online education. There is archaeology, excavation studies. There are model products, normally we were supposed to do it with practice groups, we realized that it was not going to be possible, we explained it to the mother, we explained it to the child, and the child made it at home, took a video of it, presented it, and made a presentation to his/her friends in class. Yes, we did that too. When we say school trip, I am now thinking of going on a trip and having the child plant tomatoes and peppers there, because I'm old." (P7)

"I often use web 2.0 tools that have been introduced to our lives with online education. There are book applications, concept maps, avatar and comic book applications.... Therefore, web 2.0 tools should have a place in the Social Studies curriculum in this context. It should be taught as a separate course. I think it should be given as a separate course to the teachers in faculties of education. Let me give a simple example. When teaching geometric shapes, you can make students write and memorize the characteristics of a square as much as you want. The child is not very interested. But there is a program called chatdelpix. The child can make a geometric shape and make that shape talk. He makes a mouth and eyes and makes them talk. I tell everyone to draw a geometric shape, then use the program to take a picture of it and make it talk. (S)He will explain the characteristics of the shape. I am a square, I have 4 corners and 4 sides and I think this is very effective. In this respect, the use of web2 devices is very important and should be taught as a separate course in faculties of education.

Yes, we don't give books to children anymore, but children create an avatar for themselves. I ask them to tell a story and they send me that story. For example, they do it with love. At least the child acquires the ability to express himself/herself and develops 21st century skills related to the correct use of technology." (P4)

"We also use similar things, it really is, I mean the more you should make it interesting, or more precisely I do it like this: if you give food to someone who is not hungry, they will not eat it. More precisely, I do it like this, first I make the students curious before about the things I am going to teach them, after they are curious, it is already easy to teach them something. Sometimes I cut them off at the most crucial point and leave them in the middle. When I say, "Let's discuss it again tomorrow, let's see what happens next." They come back the next day really prepared and informed, and it turns into a very comfortable discussion. When I meet their families a few days later, I hear back from them every word that was discussed, because what they learn there, they pass on to their parents in the same way, and they even become parents' teachers. I mean, I observe how useful a language is when it turns into a practice." (P1)

"...I create symbols, and students can also draw them. What I mean by symbols is like a smiley face and a sad face. When the student does a correct behavior, he/she gets a smiley face. When he shows a wrong behavior, we do not call it a wrong behavior, but 'I know the right behavior, but it just popped out of my mind', I even applied the same methods with my own son, and he gets a sad face symbol when it popped out of his/her mind" (P10).

"As two of my teachers mentioned, I have also used such applications before. At first, I used them believing that they worked, and then I started not to use them too much, seeing that their effect decreased... Instead, as the child grows up, as he/she is in the third and fourth grades, he/she starts expressing himself/herself as 'I am an individual', trying to get himself/herself accepted in a group and reflecting the behavior of being accepted, and with the reflections of the pre-adolescence period, I think that there is a racing environment in such applications." (P8)

"I mostly use drama technique to develop 21st century skills, even though it is difficult due to some conditions, and I see the benefits. At least the children are more active in the lesson. I use drama." (P2)

The model of the last topic of the research, the problems encountered in the process of acquiring 21st century skills, is shown in Diagram 7. The topic of the problems encountered by the participants in the process of acquiring 21st century skills was expressed with 6 codes: failure of program makers to consult with teachers, students' addiction to technology, financial problems/limited access to technology, pandemic, high class size, and lack of technological knowledge of teachers.
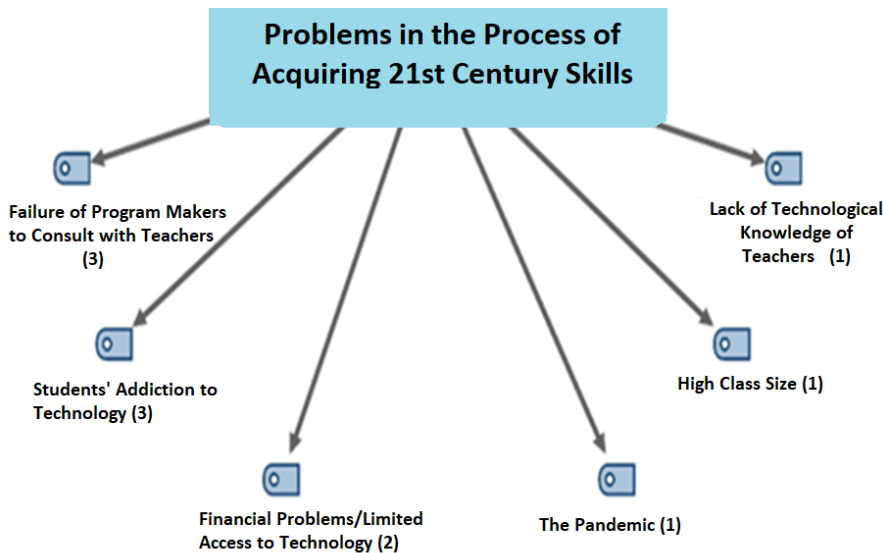

Diagram 7. Code model for the topic of problems encountered in the process of acquiring 21st century skills.

The codes most frequently mentioned by the participants were failure of program makers to consult with teachers, students' addiction to technology, limited access to technology, pandemic, class size, and teachers' technological knowledge.

"So, we don't do the following. Unfortunately, the opinion of educators is not taken much when developing programs in the country. In other words, they do not consult the people in the field much." (P4)

"I think of children who are lost in technology. I think of students who have lost communication because of the technology, who have no social life, who are only addicted to technology." (P3)

"There are some differences about the usage of technology, some people can access it very easily, some people don't even have internet access at home. These are of course also effective. Thank you." (P9)

"Due to the use of technology and the pandemic, children may leave their homes less, and they may be losing communication skills related to socialization in the back ground." (P10)

"The following can be in the Social Studies learning objectives of 21st century skills, the class sizes being overcrowded is important because in overcrowded classrooms, teachers have difficulties in directing students to group activities or in individual work. And you cannot give equal amount of time to all of the groups. Therefore, overcrowded classes are a problem here." (P9)

"First and foremost, unfortunately, we could not keep up with this electronic and digital world. …. Unfortunately, we need to train ourselves first. I see that the children are one step ahead of us. To be honest, I am working to keep up with them. I sit and try to train myself. Otherwise, if they realize that you are not at the same skill level as them, you will not be very productive for them." (P5)

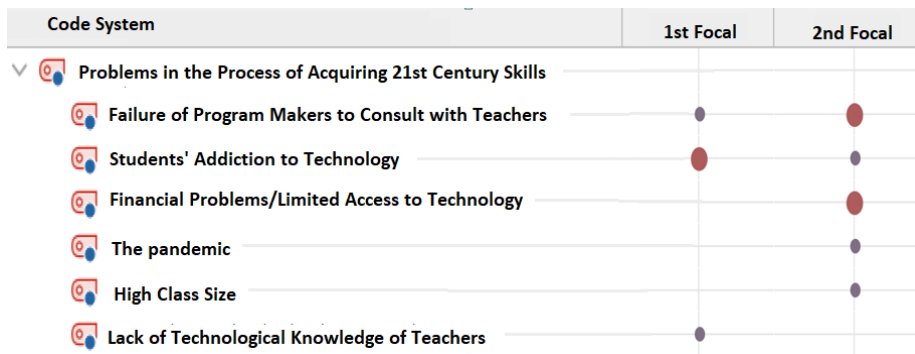| Code System	1st Focal	2nd Focal
∨ Problems in the Process of Acquiring 21st Century Skills		
Failure of Program Makers to Consult with Teachers	●	●
Students' Addiction to Technology	●	●
Financial Problems/Limited Access to Technology		●
The pandemic		●
High Class Size		●
Lack of Technological Knowledge of Teachers	●	

Diagram 8. Problems in the process of acquiring 21st century skills of the participants

When we analyzed the participants' views about the problems in the process of acquiring 21st century skills on a participant basis, as shown in Diagram 8, the participants made evaluations in very different ways.
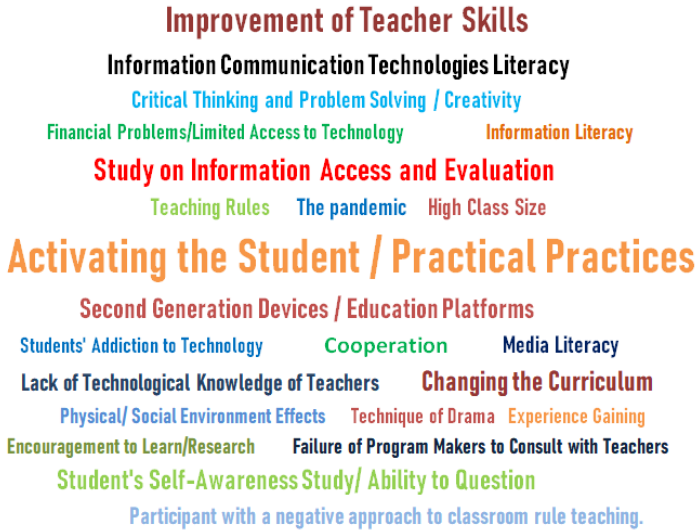
Improvement of Teacher Skills

Information Communication Technologies Literacy

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving / Creativity

Financial Problems/Limited Access to Technology   Information Literacy

Study on Information Access and Evaluation

Teaching Rules   The pandemic   High Class Size

Activating the Student / Practical Practices

Second Generation Devices / Education Platforms

Students' Addiction to Technology   Cooperation   Media Literacy

Lack of Technological Knowledge of Teachers   Changing the Curriculum

Physical/ Social Environment Effects   Technique of Drama   Experience Gaining

Encouragement to Learn/Research   Failure of Program Makers to Consult with Teachers

Student's Self-Awareness Study/ Ability to Question

Participant with a negative approach to classroom rule teaching.

Diagram 9. Code Cloud

The distribution of participants' statements according to their intensity is shown in Diagram 9. The codes shown in bigger font size indicate more intensively used statements, while the statements in smaller font size indicate that the codes are used less intensively.

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results of the interviews, it was concluded that the participants mostly emphasized the statements related to information, media and technology skills. Participants' opinions on the skills sub-theme emphasized ICT literacy at a high rate, and they also considered media literacy and information literacy important, respectively. It was determined that they were of the opinion that the program contents should be arranged in a way to prioritize studies on information, media and communication skills. When the literature was examined, it was seen that a similar result was reached with the study conducted by Erten (2019). According to the results of the research, proficiency in information-communication technologies is more effective in having sufficient level of 21st century skills. For this reason, it is concluded that the curriculum should be organized in a way to include these skills in particular.

The results of the research conducted by Atlı (2019), also reveal that the level of classroom teachers' use of educational technologies is high. Being able to use educational technologies effectively is one of the basic skills that teachers should have in the current period. Teachers' acceptance of technology as one of the important ways to support students in accessing information through research from reliable sources instead of directly transferring information to them is in accordance with the results of this research. Stockless (2022), concluded in his research that teachers are not very interested in technology, online classrooms and are not familiar with technological programs. He also concluded that teachers have the opportunity to teach 25% more than they teach when they use technology pedagogically.

When the category of learning-innovation skills was examined, it was determined that the participants intensively thought that 21st century skills consisted of critical thinking, problem solving and creativity skills. Karabekmez (2021), also obtained similar results in his research. In the research, it was determined that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between classroom teachers' use of 21st century teacher skills and their critical thinking skills.

When the opinions of the participants were analyzed, it was concluded that another code was the communication and cooperation code. Participants emphasized that they want to raise individuals who can use communication skills effectively and solve problems through cooperation. Atalay, Anagün, & Genç Kumtepe (2016), in their research on candidate teachers, concluded that they put cooperation and communication to work at every stage they applied and that they improved in the stages of the process in this way. This result supports the results of this research.

Another result of the research is that none of the teachers in the focus groups expressed opinions about entrepreneurship, responsibility, self-presentation, leadership and flexibility skills, which are included in life and professional skills. Based on this result, it can be said that classroom teachers do not recognize these skills as 21st century skills. Although this is the case, another research in the literature emphasizes that as students' life skills increase, their social skills levels also increase (Kafkas, 2018).

When the results obtained from the research are evaluated holistically, it can be said that the importance given to 21st century skills by teachers is quite high. This result shows that teachers are conscious about 21st century skills. It is seen that teachers can respond to the expectation that they should be "information-media and technology literate, have effective communication, work in cooperation, think creatively-critically, and solve problems" (Kotluk & Kocakaya, 2015), which are described as 21st century skills.

It was also determined that the classroom teachers who expressed the opinion that the objectives of the Social Studies course were not skill-based also stated that there were no practical practices in the program for students to acquire skills, that the curriculum did not include all students in terms of individual differences, and that the objectives made students passive. They also stated that Social Studies teaching is theoretical and based on memorization.

When the results were analyzed holistically, it was concluded that the participants were of the opinion that 21st century skills, which were stated to be lacking in the curriculum, should be integrated into the curriculum. It is suggested that the learning objectives should be updated to cover the needs of the era and the topics in the curriculum should be detailed in this context. Participants especially emphasized that the ability to access and evaluate information should be included in the curriculum as a skill that should be acquired by all educational stakeholders.

When the opinions of the participants regarding the methods used to acquire 21st century skills were examined, it was determined that the codes of experience gaining, secondary generation devices/education platforms, encouragement to learn/research, teaching rules and drama technique were expressed. While the participants who expressed their opinions on the code of experience gaining stated that they used this method mostly with traditional methods, only participant 4 stated that (s)he gained experience by using information and communication technologies effectively.

When the opinions of the participants were evaluated, it was concluded that they did not have detailed knowledge about the methods and techniques mentioned. Although the participants emphasized constructivist education, they stated that the methods used could develop 21st century skills in a limited area. The effect of senior teachers can be considered as a factor in this situation. As a matter of fact, in the literature, while some studies examining the 21st century teacher and learner skills of classroom teachers in terms of seniority variable show a significant difference (Korkmaz, 2019; Yalçın İncik, 2020), some studies do not show a significant difference in terms of seniority (Özer, 2021).

Regarding the 21st century skills acquisition process, it was stated that the biggest problem was that teachers' opinions were not taken into consideration in the process of developing the curriculum. Teachers think that this is where the problems within the system come from since their opinions are not taken into consideration. Another expressed issue is addiction to technology. They stated that with the development of technology, students' social skills weakened and they became addicted to technology.

Other problems are economic reasons, high class size and lack of technological knowledge, respectively.

It was concluded that classrooms do not have sufficient technological equipment, families of students do not have sufficient financial means, the facilities in the school are not enough for the number of students, and teachers do not have sufficient knowledge about technology. These problems restrict both students and teachers in achieving 21st century skills.

In the research, it was also observed that the focus groups concentrated on different problems. While the 1st focus group emphasized that the problem was generally caused by technology addiction, the 2nd focus group focused more on the fact that the program developers did not take teachers' opinions into consideration and financial problems.

Recommendations

In this study, which aims to determine the opinions of classroom teachers on the adequacy of the Social Studies Curriculum in terms of acquiring twenty-first century skills, the suggestions presented in connection with the results obtained within the framework of the results are classified and presented below.

Recommendations for Researchers

- The skills that the participants did not express as 21st century skills can be the subject of a comprehensive research.
- A more comprehensive study can be conducted on the skills with school administrators and students who were not included in the study.
- The research was conducted as a focus group with the participation of teachers in Balıkesir-Bandırma district. Other studies can be conducted in different provinces, with different samples and using quantitative method.

Recommendations for Curriculum Development Experts

- Before the application phase of the curriculum to be developed, the opinions, criticisms and suggestions of the teachers about the situations experienced in the application of the curriculum should be taken. The meeting

proceedings of the group meetings should be made available to curriculum development specialists in the digital space.

- The program should be simplified in order to have time for the activities to be carried out for the acquisition of skills.

Recommendations for Classroom Teachers

- Courses should be provided for students to develop the required knowledge, skills and attitudes to behave appropriately in digital environments.
- Teachers, who are the applicators of the program, should be trained on the processes of acquiring the skills of the era.
- It should be ensured that the trainings given to teachers are supervised in a planned and programmed manner and provided that the level of knowledge of teachers on this subject is increased.

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