

Social Studies in Out-of-Class Learning Environments: A study on Teacher Candidates' Views and Awareness

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to investigate the awareness of out-of-class learning environments that can be utilized in social studies courses among both social studies teacher candidates and primary school teacher candidates. Social studies, with its interdisciplinary nature, has the potential to provide a wide array of out-of-class learning opportunities, and we aimed to explore this aspect. In pursuit of this objective, we sought to evaluate the extent of teacher candidates' familiarity with these learning environments and their ability to establish connections between these settings and the content of the social studies course. In our research we used the descriptive case study which is one of the types of qualitative research methods. In this context, we carried out the qualitative data collection process within the framework of the interview technique through a 'semi-structured interview form' for the participating teacher candidates. We analyzed all the collected data using descriptive analysis. As a result of our analyses, we found that teacher candidates from both programs who had taken this course were able to identify a wide range of out-of-class learning environments and that the most common examples they mentioned were 'museums, libraries, schoolyard, canteens and historical sites/places, excursions and laboratories'. However, we found that both groups had relative difficulty in associating these learning environments with the social studies curriculum and content. When we assessed whether this finding indicated a difference in the extent of the teacher candidates' own branches and the course hours they had taken, we found that the examples of association of the teacher candidates with less social studies field education were far behind the examples of the social studies teacher candidates. Another significant finding from the research is that the teacher candidates were more capable of offering robust examples of associations related to out-of-class in-school learning environments compared to those associated with out-of-school learning environments.

Key words: Out-of-class Learning, Curriculum Integration, Social Studies Teaching, Teacher Candidates

INTRODUCTION

In modern education processes where constructivist learning environments are adopted, the importance of out-of-class learning environments that act as a bridge between the real world and knowledge is discussed and their effective use is recommended (Altan & Ünalı, 2021; Arabacı & Akgül, 2020; Bertnam, 2011; Çengelci, 2013; Daş et al., 2021; Durdukoca, 2023; Hoisington et al., 2010). The history of out-of-class learning environments dates back to Plato and Aristotle and before them. When it comes to the age of Enlightenment and Humanism, Rousseau and Pestalozzi's prominent ideas about learning outside the classroom are encountered. In today's modern understanding of education, two important representatives of out-of-class learning are Dewey and Illich (Tokcan, 2015). Dewey says that education should be experienced in order to be permanent (Bender,

2005; Keskin & Kaplan, 2012). Experiencing the education in the classroom is possible also with out-of-class learning environments (Çengelci, 2013). An important feature of modern education and especially constructivist education approach is that it aims to establish a strong link between theory and practice (Erentay & Erdoğan, 2009). Establishing this strong bond makes it necessary to support the education given in the classroom with learning environments outside the classroom.

It is thought that the basis of out-of-class learning is based on non-formal education (Okur-Berberoğlu & Uygun 2013). Experts working in the field of out-of-class learning make various definitions. Among these, Ford (1986) defines out-of-class learning as "the activities of education carried out outside the classroom", while Lappin (1984) uses the expression "activities carried out outside the classroom to

enrich the curriculum”. Brookes (2002) defines it as “the process that the individual builds through experiences”, while Priest (1986) uses the expression “an experimental method in which all senses are mobilized for learning” and explains it as the relationship between nature and society. With out-of-class learning environments, students can access more detailed information about the questions they have in their minds, make better comments and associate the subject with daily life (Ertaş et al., 2011). Out-of-class learning environments are important learning environments that reveal the relationship between the information learnt in the classroom and real life. These environments, the purpose of which is effective and permanent learning, give students the opportunity to learn by doing and experiencing in addition to ordinary learning environments, allow them to use the five basic senses, allow learning to be permanent, and reinforce the education in the classroom. In out-of-class learning environments, students feel more comfortable than in the classroom environment and can learn according to their individual differences and learning speed (Lakin, 2006; Melber & Abraham, 1999; Tatar & Bağrıyanık, 2012).

Out-of-class learning environments, which are increasingly emphasized in education (Goodwin et al., 2010), have also influenced the research and practices related to education and training in Türkiye in recent years. It can be said that out-of-class learning environments have become more prominent within the framework of the constructivist approach based on the curricula updated and put into practice in 2005 in Türkiye (Karşlı & Kurt, 2022). When the literature on out-of-class learning environments in Türkiye is examined, it is seen that there is a confusion in terms of the names used in the studies; there is no unity in terms of the use of names in studies expressing the same or different fields. It can also be argued that this difference has passed from English to Turkish. Looking at the English literature, there are many different names such as “outdoor learning/education (Christie et al., 2016), out of school learning/education (Henriksson, 2018), outside of school learning/education (Fischer et al., 2020), out of class learning/education (Lai et al., 2015).

In Türkiye, there are three most common nomenclatures used for out-of-class learning environments. The first and most common is “out-of-school” (Saraç, 2017; Şimşek & Kaymakçı, 2015; Kılıç & Şen 2014; Ustabulut, 2021; Keskin & Kaplan, 2012), the second is “out-of-class” (Çengelci, 2013) and the third is “out-of-class school” (Malkoç & Kaya, 2015) learning spaces (environments). So much so that even Karşlı and Kurt (2022), who examined 74 different studies conducted between 2012 and 2021 in the context of this subject in the literature, can be criticized for supporting the current conceptual confusion by evaluating all studies under the title of “out-of-school learning environments” without making a classification. Out-of-school learning environments are generally used to refer to environments that start beyond the garden wall of the school. Out-of-class school learning environments, on the other hand, are used for environments outside the classroom but not beyond the schoolyard wall, and this nomenclature is used to reveal the difference between

this nomenclature and the dominant out-of-school learning environments nomenclature.

Out-of-class learning environments are used instead of both out-of-school (Göksu, 2020) and out-of-class in-school learning environments (Çepni & Aydın, 2015; Malkoç & Kaya, 2015). In some studies, it is understood that the out-of-school definition is also used to include out-of-class school learning environments (Şimşek & Kaymakçı, 2015). In this study, we believe that if there is to be an umbrella nomenclature, using the definition of “out-of-class learning environments” and defining other nomenclatures as sub-areas under this field can end the confusion. There are also some researches that support this suggestion we have put forward here. Şeker and Savaş (2023) reported in their study that teachers defined out-of-school learning environments as the environment outside the school and classroom. Similarly, Çengelci (2013) drew attention to the breadth of the field in his study and preferred to use the definition of out-of-class learning environments. With all these differences, the common aim of the studies conducted under all three names is to reveal the effectiveness of the activities carried out/to be carried out in out-of-class environments. Therefore, in the light of these reasons, in the light of the information given above, we considered it a more appropriate approach to use the name “out-of-class learning environments” in terms of its suitability and validity for the purpose of the field.

Out-of-class Learning Environments and Social Studies

When the content of the social studies curriculum, which was prepared and put into practice in Türkiye in 2005 based on the constructivist approach, is examined, it can be said that a lot of guidance is given to out-of-class learning environments. It is possible to evaluate the skills such as perceiving space, time, chronology, change and continuity, social participation, making observations and using information technologies (MoNE, 2004), which are aimed to be acquired by students in the social studies curriculum, in the context of out-of-class learning environments. This orientation has been further strengthened in the current curriculum. In the current curriculum, it is important to make use of out-of-class learning environments in social studies teaching. The Ministry of National Education states that environments such as the immediate surroundings of the school (such as the schoolyard), government offices, marketplaces, factories, archaeological excavation sites, exhibitions, museums, workshops and historical sites (monuments, historical buildings, battlefields, museum-cities, virtual museum visits, etc.) can be used for out-of-class learning activities (MoNE, 2018). The social studies course, which has an interdisciplinary structure, includes content from disciplines such as history, geography, philosophy, psychology, sociology, sociology, economics, law, archaeology, and anthropology (MoNE, 2004). Considering the areas where all these disciplines are represented in our daily lives, a very rich learning framework is pointed out for the social studies course in terms of out-of-class learning environments.

Our opinion is that the social studies course is in an important position in the context of raising the people needed

by our age on the axis of 21st century skills. The learning areas identified by NCSS give students the opportunity to develop active learning, critical, innovative thinking and collaborative skills in all areas of life. If what is taught in the social studies course is applied in daily life, it will make it easier to achieve the goal of raising students as an active member of society. For this reason, it is important to support the social studies course with learning environments outside the classroom. In addition, constructivism, which deeply affects today's education systems, forces the traditional teaching-learning process to change with the principles and practices it envisages. In this context, it is unthinkable that the social studies course should be limited to four walls. In any case, it is very important to support social studies courses with learning environments outside the classroom (Çengelci, 2013). When social studies is considered as a course in which students gain the necessary knowledge, skills and values in order to help them become an active member of the society (Çengelci, 2013), the necessity of supporting it with out-of-class learning environments for the realization of this purpose emerges. Since the social studies course, which is intertwined with daily life due to its content, cannot be limited to the classroom, it is very important to use out-of-class learning environments.

It is contrary to the nature of social studies that the social studies course, which has an integrated structure with social life, is generally limited to the classroom. In particular, the fact that the social studies course consists of the information given in the textbook makes the course boring and this is an important problem. The social studies course, which has an important responsibility in the realization of the individual's social existence (MoNE, 2006), should benefit from learning environments outside the classroom in fulfilling this role. In the social studies course, much knowledge, skills and values that are difficult to gain or cannot be gained in the classroom environment can be gained effectively in out-of-class learning environments (Ata, 2006; Yeşilbursa, 2015).

When we examine the related literature, we see that studies have been conducted in Türkiye on almost all courses in the center of out-of-class learning environments. In the studies conducted in the field of social studies education, museums as out-of-class learning environments in social studies (Keskin & Kaplan, 2012; Filiz, 2010; Kartal & Şeyhoğlu, 2020; Gül & Yorulmaz, 2016; Üztemur et al., 2018; Gürel & Çetin, 2018; Gürel & Er, 2020), history teaching outside the classroom (Öner, 2015), science centers as out-of-class learning environments (Öner & Öztürk, 2019), social studies teaches' use of out-of-class school environments (Malçoç & Kaya, 2015; Çengelci, 2013), and the effectiveness of out-of-class learning areas according to social studies teacher candidates (Seyhan, 2020). Furthermore, considering that the current social studies curriculum encompasses a total of 27 skills, including 8 different literacy skills, the emphasis on skill development within social studies education becomes clear. Therefore, the importance of experiential learning in teaching these skills is undeniable. Within this framework, we assert that the concept of out-of-class learning holds a crucial role in the teaching of both literacy and life skills

within the realm of social studies. In our study, we aim to determine which out-of-class learning environments social studies and primary school teacher candidates can carry social studies teaching to when they think as a teacher and to make sense of the reasons for their preferences. In this context, our study differs from other studies in the field.

Objective and Research Questions

In the early 20th century, there were discussions on the transfer of education outside the school and ideas were put forward on how to have education without schools. With the COVID 19 pandemic that affected the whole world, transformations have been experienced in the field of education as in every field. In this process, students continued their education without schools and continued their educational lives. Undoubtedly, we think that this situation has forced all educators in the «back to school» phase. In this case, it is inevitable that learning activities in classrooms will have problems in the motivation of new generation learners in the learning process. Obviously, in such a situation, out-of-class learning environments have become more attractive.

As it is known, the importance of out-of-class learning environments has increased in today's educational understanding where experience is more prominent in education. Through this research, our objective was to make a meaningful contribution to the literature regarding the role and significance of these learning environments within the context of social studies courses. Social Studies is a course with interdisciplinary content by its nature, and the interdisciplinary structure and learning environments of Social Studies are taught to teacher candidates within the scope of the "Teaching Social Studies" course in the undergraduate programs of Social Studies Teaching and Classroom Teaching in our country. In our study, we aimed to determine the awareness levels of Social Studies and Classroom Teaching teacher candidates who have taken the "Teaching Social Studies I (Semester 5) and Social Studies II (Semester 6)" courses in Social Studies Teaching undergraduate programs and "Teaching Social Studies (Semester 6)" courses in Classroom Teaching undergraduate programs towards out-of-class learning environments that can be used in social studies courses. In this framework, in the first stage, we wanted to determine what the teacher candidates' level of knowledge about these learning environments is and what level of diversification they can make. Afterwards, we focused on evaluating whether the awareness states we identified indicate a difference in the scale of their branches and the course hours they take. In this framework, we aimed to create a basis for a discussion on the level of reflection of their current awareness on teacher candidates' technological pedagogical content knowledge and curriculum knowledge by asking them to make a justification for which learning environments they put forward can be used in teaching which acquisition or subject in social studies courses.

In this context, our research objective was formed as follows: "How are the views and awareness of social studies and primary school teacher candidates about out-of-class learning environments in the context of social studies

teaching?”. In the context of analyzing this problem, the open-ended questions we asked to the teacher candidates are listed as follows:

1. What are the out-of-class in-school learning environments examples of social studies teacher education and primary school teacher candidates?
2. How do Social Studies and Primary School teacher candidates associate out-of-class in-school learning environments with the social studies curriculum?
3. What are the out-of-school learning examples of social studies teacher education and primary school teacher candidates?
4. How do social studies and primary school teacher candidates associate out-of-school learning environments with the social studies curriculum?

METHOD

Research Design

Qualitative research methodology was used in the research and specifically utilizing the descriptive case study model, which is a qualitative research design. This descriptive model seeks to elucidate previously unclear situations (Davey, 1991). Case studies concentrate on the influence of factors like the environment, individuals, and processes in a given situation, as well as how they may be influenced by that particular scenario (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The descriptive case study focuses on an intervention and the purpose of describing the phenomenon and the real-life context in which it emerges (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1984). Within the scope of our research, we wanted to reveal and analyze in detail the awareness of teacher candidates who had taken the “social studies teaching” course during their undergraduate education and received training on out-of-class learning environments (out-of-class, in-school and out-of-school) within the content of this course. For this reason, within the framework of the descriptive case study model we followed, we applied the interview technique using a “semi-structured interview form” with the participating teacher candidates. In this framework, we tried to collect all qualitative data related to the research.

Participants

The participants were 33 teacher candidates from the social studies education undergraduate program and 25 teacher candidates from the primary school teacher education undergraduate program participated in the study. The following procedure was followed while determining the teacher candidates participating in the study. Purposive sampling technique was used in the research. The purposive sampling technique is a type of non-probability sampling that is most effective when one needs to study a certain cultural domain with knowledgeable experts within (Tongco, 2007). It was taken into consideration that teacher candidates from both branches had taken a field education course in their undergraduate programs in which they were informed about the

methods, methodologies and curriculum practices related to social studies teaching, including out-of-class learning topics. In this context, the “Social Studies Teaching I” and “Social Studies Teaching II” courses in the social studies teacher education undergraduate program are given over two semesters in the 5th and 6th semesters. Each course has a total course credit of 6 hours, 3 hours per week. In classroom teaching undergraduate program, «Social Studies Teaching» is given only in the 6th semester. The weekly course credit for this course is 3 hours.

Interview Questions

With the “semi-structured interview form” we used in our study; two open-ended questions were asked to the social studies and primary school teacher candidates:

1. Give 4 different examples out-of-class in-school learning environments that you think can be used in social studies teaching and explain in one sentence (specifying the name of the unit or subject) that each of them can be used to support the teaching of which units and subjects in social studies courses?
2. Give 4 different examples out-of-school learning environments that you think can be used in social studies teaching and explain in one sentence (specifying the name of the unit or subject) that each of them can be used to support the teaching of which units and subjects in social studies courses?

Data Collection Process and Analysis

In order to analyze the qualitative data collected within the scope of the research, descriptive analysis technique was used. Data analysis was carried out in accordance with certain stages. These stages are categorized into four sections as coding of the data, identification of themes in the coded data, organization of codes and themes, and description and interpretation of findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In this context, within our study, based on the responses provided by the teacher candidates to the questions we posed, we created themes for each question context, made classifications, and while determining these classifications and themes, we also referred to numbers. The research data were initially analyzed using Nvivo software. However, to ensure the reliability of the data analysis, the authors met and compared the individual analyses they had produced within the framework of the descriptive analysis and finalized the analysis. Subsequently, we conducted interpretations based on the expressions used by teacher candidates to reveal meanings. In a sense, we also conducted a “second reading” of our data. We attempted to make sense of the views, awareness and the integration of out-of-class learning environments into social studies learning domains by teacher candidates in both undergraduate programs. In the example shares related to participants’ statements, we have presented the categorization of integration we created within this framework, including the original expressions of the participants.

Ethical statement

This research has been unanimously approved as ethical by the Istanbul University, Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee on 10.05.2022 with meeting decision number 2022/158.

FINDINGS

1. Findings for first research question: Examples of out-of-class in-school learning environments

In this part of the study, it was tried to reflect the awareness of the social studies and primary school teacher candidates participating in the research by sharing the examples they gave for out-of-class in-school learning environments

When Table 1 is analysed, it can be seen that the examples put forward by teacher candidates from two different branches for the out-of-class in-school learning environment are largely similar to each other. However, it is evident that social studies teacher candidates were able to provide a much greater number of examples compared to classroom teaching teacher candidates, and these examples exhibited

greater diversity. It can be seen that both groups ranked school library (45, 21%), schoolyard (43, 20%), canteen (26, 12%), laboratory (21, 10%), computer laboratory (16, 7%) and sports hall (14, 6%) examples in the first place. In order to reflect in more detail how these examples are shaped in two different branches, we wanted to share them separately by using "word cloud visuals".

Social Studies Teacher Candidates

Teacher candidates in the social studies education program provided examples of 23 different out-of-class in-school learning environments. As seen in Figure 1, the prominent examples among these learning environments are the school library (24, 19%), schoolyard (22, 18%), canteen (15, 12%), laboratory (14, 11%), computer laboratory (13, 10%), social studies laboratory (7, 7%) and school corridors (5, 4%). The examples given by social studies teacher candidates that differ from primary school teacher candidates are as follows: social studies laboratory (7), masjid (4), school boards (3), teachers' room (2), workshops (1), classrooms named after certain classes (1), principal's room (1), question solution

Table 1. Examples given by teacher candidates for out-of-class in-school learning environments

Out-of-class in-school learning environments	Social studies teacher candidates (f)	Primary school teacher candidates (f)
Library	24	21
Schoolyard	22	21
Canteen	15	11
Laboratory	14	7
Sports Hall	4	10
Computer Classroom/Room/Laboratory	13	4
Social Studies Classroom	7	-
Conference Hall	3	3
School Corridors	5	-
Masjid	4	-
Clubs	-	4
School notice boards	3	-
Multipurpose Hall	1	2
Drama Room	1	2
Game Room/Salon	-	2
Dining Hall	1	2
Teachers Room	2	-
Toilet	1	2
School District	-	1
Folklore Studies	-	1
Workshops	1	-
Classes named after specific subjects	1	-
School Board	1	-
Observation Room	1	-
Manager Room	1	-
Question Solution Room	1	-
Theatre Hall	1	1
Total	127	94

in-school learning environments in social studies instruction, it was observed that the learning domains “people, places, and environments,” “science, technology, and society,” “culture and heritage,” “production, distribution, consumption,” “active citizenship,” and “individual and society” stood out. Therefore, teacher candidates were able to provide an example of association for six out of the seven learning domains included in the curriculum. However, social studies teacher candidates did not provide any examples related to the “global connections” learning domains. In Table 2, the examples of the social studies teacher candidates and the learning domains they associated with them are presented.

When Table 2 is examined, it can be seen that while teacher candidates gave 7 different examples for active citizenship and culture and heritage learning domains, they gave 6 different examples for Individual and society and people, places and environments learning domains, and 2 different examples for production, distribution and consumption and science, technology and society learning domains. However, teacher candidates could not share an association suggestion for any of the learning domains of the social studies course for 15 different out-of-class in-school learning environments. Detailed explanations for some participants are provided below based on the data we obtained in our study.

From social studies teacher candidates, SSTc4 (Social Studies Teacher candidate-4), gave examples that some out-of-class in-school learning environments can be associating the learning domains of “people, places and environments; production, distribution and consumption; science, technology and society; and people, places and environments”:

- Schoolyard: [*People, places, environments*]. Activities are carried out to perceive his/her place.
- Canteen: [*Production, distribution, consumption*]. Students recognize economic activities around them.
- Computer room: [*Science, technology and society*]. Teachers give students tasks that require them to use the technology in front of them.
- Laboratory: [*People, places and environments*]. Students know basic geographical features by analysing maps.

While listing examples of out-of-class in-school learning environments and related activities, SSTc7 mentioned the “people, places, and environments” and “culture and heritage” learning domains:

- School Library(s): [*People, places, and environments*]. Students can perceive chronology and time in encyclopaedias and learn about the places we live in geography. They can study maps, ancient civilizations with maps, and learning through maps, for example.
- (Social Studies) Laboratory: [*People, places, and environments; Culture and heritage*]. Here, they can research historical and geographical locations, use trial-and-error methods, and examine topics like archaeological science in history, lands and landforms in geography, for example, studying with maps and landforms.
- Drama Room: [*Culture and heritage*]. It can be used to reenact historical battles and events. For instance, they

can reenact topics related to wars like the Conquest of Istanbul, Ottoman campaigns, as well as topics related to the War of Independence, battlefronts, and the effects of World War I through drama.

- Observation Room: [*People, places, and environments*]. They can study celestial events, meteorology, and geographical topics using telescopes or other instruments.
- Social studies teacher candidate SSTc14, listed various activity examples from the 5th, 6th and 7th grade social studies course unit topics for out-of-class in-school learning domains. SSTc14 included examples from the learning domains of “people, places and environments; active citizenship; and culture and heritage”:
- Laboratories: [*People, places and environments*]. The topic of “Where does what belong” from the 5th-grade curriculum can be mapped and worked on using human and natural beauties.
 - Conference hall: [*Active citizenship; Culture and heritage*]. The school’s conference hall serves as an in-school learning space for theatre, discussions, and social events. It can be used to teach the 7th-grade topic of “Fatih’s Conquest of Istanbul.
 - School corridors: [*Active citizenship*] The topic of “Our rights and responsibilities” can be made more educational for children through observation. We can say that the information boards in the corridors are also important in this sense.

It was observed that SSTc31 associated the learning environments he shared with the learning domains of “people, places and environments; culture and heritage; and active citizenship”. In the two specific examples he gave, he suggest that the masjid in the school can be used to discuss the birth of Islam and the manager room can be used to discuss participation in governance:

- Library: [*People, places and environments*]. “Life on Earth” unit.
- Masjid: [*Culture and heritage*]. The birth of Islam can be taught here.
- Manager room: [*Active citizenship*]. We can associate it with the unit “I participate in management”.

Primary School Teacher Candidates

It was seen that the learning domains of “production, distribution, consumption”, “people, places and environments”, “active citizenship”, “individual and society”, “culture and heritage” and “science, technology and society” came to the fore in the answers given by primary school teacher candidates to the question about how they would use out-of-class in-school learning environments in social studies teaching. Therefore, primary school teacher candidates were able to share an example of association for 6 out of 7 learning domains in the curriculum. However, the teacher candidates could not give any association examples for the “global connections” learning domains. In Table 3, the examples of the primary school teacher candidates and the learning domains they associated with them are presented.

According to Table 3, teacher candidates provided 4 different examples each for the learning domains of production,

Table 2. Social studies teacher candidates' associations out-of-class in-school learning environments with social studies curriculum learning domains

Out-of-Class in-School Learning Environments	<i>f</i>	Social Studies Learning Domains	<i>f</i>		
Schoolyard	11	People, Places, and Environments	21		
Library	3				
Social Studies Classroom	3				
Laboratory	2				
School Board	1				
Teachers Room	1				
Computer Classroom/Room/Laboratory	13	Science, Technology, and Society	18		
Laboratory	5	Culture and Heritage	16		
Library	8				
Masjid	3				
School Corridors	1				
Schoolyard	1				
School Boards	1				
Sports Hall	1	Production, Distribution, Consumption	14		
Dining Hall	1				
Canteen	11				
Schoolyard	3				
Canteen	3				
Schoolyard	2				
School Corridors	2	Active Citizenship	12		
Library	2				
Manager Room	1				
Teachers Room	1				
School notice boards	1				
Schoolyard	1				
Schoolyard	5	Individual and Society	10		
Toilet	1	Global Connections	0		
Canteen	1				
Laboratory	1				
Library	1				
School Corridors	1				
---	0				
Library	10	Not associated with any learning domains	36		
Laboratory	6				
Social Studies Classroom	4				
Conference Hall	3				
Sports Hall	3				
Drama Room	1				
Observation Room	1	Not associated with any learning domains	36		
Workshops	1				
School Corridors	1				
School Boards	1				
Theatre Hall	1				
Classes named after specific subjects	1				
Question Solution Room	1				
Multipurpose Hall	1				
Masjid	1				
Total	127				127

Table 3. Primary school teacher candidates' associations out-of-class in-school learning environments with social studies curriculum learning domains

Out-of-Class in-School Learning Environments	<i>f</i>	Social Studies Learning Domains	<i>f</i>
Canteen	11	Production, Distribution, Consumption	18
Library	4		
Dining Hall	2		
Computer Classroom/Room/Laboratory	1		
School Playground	10	People, Places, and Environments	16
Library	3		
Sports Hall	2		
School District	1		
Conference Hall	2	Active Citizenship	8
Library	3		
Game Room/Salon	2		
Toilet	1		
Sports Hall	3	Individual and Society	8
Toilet	2		
Drama Room	2		
Conference Hall	1		
Library	4	Culture and Heritage	8
Drama Room	2		
School Playground	1		
Theatre Hall	1		
Laboratory	3	Science, Technology, and Society	7
Computer Classroom/Room/Laboratory	3		
Multipurpose Hall	1		
---	0	Global Connections	0
School Playground	10	Not associated with any learning domains	29
Library	7		
Sports Hall	5		
Laboratory	4		
Folklore Studies	1		
Multipurpose Hall	1		
Folklore Studies	1		
Total	94		94

distribution and consumption, people, places and environments, active citizenship, culture and heritage and individual and society, they provided 3 different examples for the learning domain of science, technology and society. However, primary school teacher candidates could not share an association suggestion for any of the learning areas of the social studies course for 7 different out-of-class in-school learning environments. Detailed explanations for some participants are provided below based on the data we obtained in our study.

PSTc9 (Primary School Teacher candidate-9), gave examples in the learning domains of “production, distribution and consumption; people, places and environments; active citizenship; and individual and society” and listed the learning environments according to the areas as follows:

- Canteen, Dining hall: [*Production, distribution and consumption*]. Students recognize that the distribution and consumption take place at this point.
- School district: [*People, places and environments*]. The school territory can be analyzed, so that emergency areas and safe zones can also be learnt.
- Conference room: [*Active citizenship*]. Election of school representatives, students learn about their rights.
- Schoolyard: [*Individual and society*]. Inter-class play activities can be organized. Students learn the concept of respecting differences.

PSTc24 mentioned that the school conference hall can be used for “individual and society” while the school library can be used for “multiple learning domain.” However, he didn’t provide an explanation for how the suggested examples of

the schoolyard and laboratory can be associated with specific learning domains, topics, and/or outcomes in social studies instruction:

- Conference room: [*Individual and society*]. Lecturers, exemplary personalities address the students. They show the way.
- Library: [*Applicable to many units/learning domains*]. Teachers and students have access to books.
- Schoolyards: [-----]. Activities requiring physical activity are carried out here. Life in nature.
- Laboratory: [-----]. Healthy life.

The primary school teacher candidate PSTc3, could not specify any learning domain that she could directly relate the examples she gave. Also, she emphasized folklore activities but did not share any examples for any learning domains:

- School theatre club: [-----]. Students will feel empathy as they learn the teaching of historical subjects, values education subjects by living-historical empathy.
- Schoolyard: [-----]. Gamification and sense of responsibility can be developed. Folklore activities can be carried out to develop hand skills. Traditional cultural learning is provided.
- School library: [-----]. Social studies provides research skills for historical topics.

Another primary school teacher candidate PSTc12, pointed to the learning domains of “people, places and environments” for the schoolyard; “culture and heritage” for the (school) library; “science, technology and society” for the computer room; and “production, distribution and consumption” for the canteen:

- Schoolyard: [*People, places and environments*]. Place and direction activities can be done.
- Computer room: [*Science, technology and society*].
- (School) Library(s): [*Culture and heritage*]. Research on cultural items can be requested.
- Canteen: [*Production, distribution, consumption*]. It is a suitable environment for learning about consumer rights.

Again, PSTc12 gave examples of canteen, schoolyard, sports hall and toilets. While PSTc12 gave an example that is not in the social studies learning domains with the name of canteen and healthy life unit, she presented examples from the learning area [individual and society] in her other examples:

- Canteen: [-----]. It can be based on the students’ shopping in the healthy life unit.
- Toilets: [*Individual and society*]. Teachings such as waiting for a queue and using clean can be developed. Students are aware of their rights.
- Schoolyard: [*Individual and Society*]. Students associate the time they spend outside the classroom with friendships and other social life.
- Sports hall: [*Individual and Society*]. Students develop co-operation and communication skills with friends. Gain good or bad experiences.

3. Findings related to the third research question: Examples of out-of-school learning environments

In this part of the study, it was tried to reflect the awareness status of the teacher candidates participating in the

research by sharing the examples they gave for out-of-school learning environments. In this context, the examples for out-of-school learning environments shared by teacher candidates enrolled in social studies teaching and primary school teaching undergraduate programmes are reflected in Table 4.

According to Table 4, it is seen that teacher candidates included almost all examples of out-of-school learning environments. As it was determined in the previous section in the examples of out-of-class learning environments, it can be seen that the examples of out-of-school learning environments provided by social studies teacher candidates (129) are significantly more than the examples provided by primary school teacher candidates (96). In order to reflect in more detail how these examples are shaped in two different branches, we wanted to share them separately by using “word cloud visuals”.

Social Studies Teacher Candidates

Social studies teacher candidates shared a total of 129 examples of out-of-school learning environments. As seen in Figure 3, the most prominent examples are museums (26, 20%), historical places/historical site (14, 11%), excursions (8, 6%), parks/national parks (8, 6%), theatres/shows/cinema (8, 6%), science centre (8, 6%), zoo (6, 5%), home/family (6, 5%), public libraries (5, 4%) and society/social environment (5, 4%). Among all the shared examples “nursing home (4), official institution (3), symposium/History Conference (3), monument/monument tomb (2), course centre (2), workshops (1), public houses (1), complex (1), places of cultural value (1), market (1), observatory (1), orphanage (1), martyrdom (1) and sports clubs (1)” were identified as different examples that differed from the primary school teacher candidates.

Primary School Teacher Candidates

The number of examples given by primary school teacher candidates for out-of-class in-school learning environments is 99. As seen in Figure 4, the most prominent of these examples are museum (24, 25%), historical places (14, 15%), zoo (9, 9%), excursion (8, 8%), home/family (7, 7%), public libraries (5, 5%) and parks/national parks (5, 5%). The out-of-school learning environments that stand out in the examples given by primary school teacher candidates differently from social studies teacher candidates are listed as “botanical garden (3), marketplace (3), aquarium (2), street (2), home-school journey (1), recycling centre (1), show centre (1), famous places and spaces of the city (1), online learning (1), kitchen (1) and festival areas (1)”.

4. Findings for the fourth research question: Examples of integration of out-of-school learning environments into learning domains

The comprehensive analyses we conducted on the examples given by teacher candidates from social studies teacher education program and primary school teacher education program showed that teacher candidates from both branches

Table 4. Examples given by teacher candidates for out-of-school learning environments

Out-of-School Learning Environments	Social studies teacher candidates (f)	Primary school teacher candidates (f)
Museum	26	24
Historical Places /Historical Site	14	10
Zoo	6	9
Excursions	8	8
Home/Family	6	7
(Public) Library(s)	5	5
Parks/National Parks	8	5
Botanical Garden	-	3
Marketplace	-	3
Theatres/Shows/Cinema	8	3
Aquarium	-	2
Factory	1	2
Street	-	2
Science Camps/Fair/Exhibition/Festival	4	1
Science Centre	8	1
Home-School Journey	-	1
Recycling Centre	-	1
Show Centre	-	1
Public Education Centre	3	1
Famous Places and Spaces of the City	-	1
Kitchen	-	1
Online Learning	-	1
Planetarium	1	1
Civil Society Organisations	2	1
Festival Areas	-	1
Society/Social Environment	5	1
Nursing Home	4	-
Official Institution	3	-
Monument/Monumental Tomb	2	-
Course Centre	2	-
Symposium/History Conference	3	-
Market	2	-
Workshops	1	-
Public Houses	1	-
Complex	1	-
Places of Cultural Value	1	-
Observatory	1	-
Sports Clubs	1	-
Martyrdom	1	-
Orphanage	1	-
Picnic Areas	-	-
Total	129	96

were able to share examples of associations with learning domains for their suggestions for out-of-school learning environments. However, it was observed that these associations were in the minority compared to the suggestions for out-of-class in-school learning environments shared in the

previous section. In other words, it was determined that both teacher candidates had difficulty in associating out-of-school learning environments with social studies learning domains. We can say that this situation is more prominent especially for primary school teacher candidates. On the other hand, it

Table 5. Social studies teacher candidates' associations out-of-school learning environments with social studies curriculum learning domains

<i>Out-of-School Learning Environments</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Learning Domain</i>	<i>f</i>
Museum	10	Culture and Heritage	23
Historical Places/Historical Site	8		
Theatres/Shows/Cinema	2		
Monument/Monumental Tomb	2		
Martyrdom	1		
Excursions	6	People, Places, and Environments	14
Zoo	3		
Parks/National Parks	3		
Society/Social Environment	2		
Museum	7	Science, Technology, and Society	14
Science Centre	5		
Science Camps/Fair/Exhibition/Festival	2		
Museum	7	Production, Distribution, Consumption	11
Excursions	2		
Market	1		
Factory	1		
Home Family	4	Individual and Society	10
Society/Social Environment	3		
Nursing Home	2		
Orphanage	1		
Official Institution	3	Active Citizenship	6
Civil Society Organisations	2		
Market	1		
---	0	Global Connections	0
Theatres/Shows/Cinema	6	Not associated with any learning domains	51
Historical Places/Historical Site	6		
(Public) Library(s)	5		
Parks/National Parks	5		
Science Centre	3		
Zoo	3		
Public Education Centre	3		
Symposium/History Conference	3		
Museum	2		
Home/Family	2		
Science Camps/Fair/Exhibition/Festival	2		
Nursing Home	2		
Course Centre	2		
Complex	1		
Places of Cultural Value	1		
Observatory	1		
Sports Clubs	1		
Planetarium	1		
Workshops	1		
Public Houses	1		
Total	129		129

- Museum: [*Production, distribution, consumption*]. Students can be taken to the “Ziraat Bank Museum to discuss banking practices, savings and national income concepts.
- Science Centre: [*Science, technology and society*]. Students can learn about the historical development of scientific developments in science centres.
- Historical Places/Historical Site: [*Culture and heritage*]. For example, values such as “patriotism” and “independence” can be taught in Çanakkale martyrdom.

SSTc8 gave examples of museums in the context of “culture and heritage” and “science, technology and society” learning domains. Stating that museums are an important place in out-of-school learning environment, teacher candidates states that history-related subjects can be taught in museums and technology museums can be used in every learning area:

- Museums: [*Culture and heritage*]. Especially museums related to history can be examined by students. It is one of the most effective methods in teaching culture and heritage.
- Museums: [*Science, technology and society*]. Technology museums and other museums can provide an effective learning environment in every learning domain. Especially in “science, technology and society unit”, students’ interest and curiosity in scientific discoveries can be fed.

SSTc6, on the other hand, referred to the “production, distribution and consumption” learning domain, which has an important place in social studies teaching, and emphasized the concept of conscious consumer, which is an important concept in our age. In this context, he pointed out that students could be taken to the market. In addition, he suggested that official institutions could be visited, and field trips could be made in order to develop democracy awareness and provided an example related to the active citizenship learning domain:

- Market: [*Production, distribution and consumption*]. I choose the supermarket because it can help them to be conscious consumers by making them shop in supermarkets and get receipts.
- Official Institutions: [*Active citizenship*]. You can go to the district governorship to develop awareness of democracy, to get information about forms of government, etc.

On the other hand, SSTc1 provided a different example and stated that nursing homes and orphanages are important learning environments for values education. Emphasising empathy skills and the value of benevolence, the learning area that SST1 made an association in this context was the individual and society:

- Nursing homes and orphanages: [*Individual and society*]. They are places where value education can be given to children. They enable them to empathize and develop common sense. By enabling them to be benevolent, it is ensured that they enjoy and adopt this feeling.

Primary School Teacher Candidates

In the examples of associations between out-of-school learning environment and learning domains of primary school

teacher candidates, the museum (19) takes the first place as in social studies teacher candidates. In other words, the most prominent learning domain for primary school teacher candidates is “culture and heritage”.

Table 6 shows that the teacher candidates could not give examples in the learning domains of “active citizenship, science, technology and society and global connections”. While giving information about the learning domains, primary school teacher candidates mentioned financial literacy, conscious consumption and socialisation skills. In addition, although the teacher candidates gave different examples (aquarium, planetarium, online learning), they could not place these examples in the learning domain of any discipline; they only associated the recycling centre with the 4th grade “science, environment and human” field. Two primary school teacher candidates did not answer this question.

For the out-of-school learning environment, the primary school teacher candidate PSTc1 gave an example of the learning domain of “production, distribution, consumption” which she associated with the marketplace. It is also understood from the statements of PSTc1 that children refer to the concepts of financial literacy and conscious consumer:

- Marketplace: [*Production, distribution, consumption*]. The children learn about the intricacies of shopping, the calculation of money and the rules of behaviour.

Among the primary school teacher candidates, 19 participants mentioned the learning domain of “culture and heritage” by giving museums as an example. Among these teacher candidates, PSTc7 stated that museums have an important place to develop sensitivity towards cultural heritage:

- Museum(s): [*Culture and heritage*]. Museums are important structures in terms of introducing historical heritage to students. The artefacts exhibited in the museum are introduced to the student and provide information.

PSTc18 gave a different example of out-of-school learning and emphasized the child’s relationship with the “street” as his/her close environment before school and stated that this is important for the learning domain of “individual and society”. According to him, the child who learns only good at school, but learns both good and bad on the street:

- Street: [*Individual and society*]. School is important for the child. But the first place he/she meets is the street. While the school teaches only the good, on the street he/she learns and compares both the good and the bad.

DISCUSSION

In this research, we aimed to explore how our teacher candidates, responsible for shaping individuals for the 21st century, can incorporate extracurricular learning settings into the realm of social studies. Similar studies focusing on extracurricular learning encompass areas such as sustainability and teacher education (Stevenson et al., 2017), environmental education and teacher preparation (Harris, 2017), and the advancement of out-of-school activities within teacher education (Yokuş, 2020). Our research, which centres on the integration of out-of-class learning environments into social

Table 6. Social studies teacher candidates' associations out-of-school learning environments with social studies curriculum learning domains

Out-of-School Learning Environments	f	Learning Domain	f
Museum	19	Culture and Heritage	26
Historical Places/Historical Site	6		
Theatres/Shows/Cinema	1		
Zoo	5	People, Places and Environments	16
Excursions	5		
Botanical Garden	3		
Museum	2		
Famous Places and Spaces of the City	1		
Home/Family	7	Individual and society	13
Theatres/Shows/Cinema	2		
Street	2		
Excursions	1		
Home-School Journey	1		
Marketplace	3	Production, Distribution, Consumption	5
Factory	2		
-	0	Science, Technology and Society	0
-	0	Active Citizenship	0
---	0	Global Connections	0
Recycling Centre	1	Out-of-field example	1
(Public) Library(s)	5	Not associated with any learning domains	35
Parks/National Parks	5		
Zoo	4		
Excursions	2		
Museum	3		
Historical Places/Historical Site	4		
Aquarium	2		
Science Camps/Fair/Exhibition/Festival	1		
Science Centre	1		
Show Centre	1		
Public Education Centre	1		
Society/Social Environment	1		
Kitchen	1		
Planetarium	1		
Online learning	1		
Civil Society Organisations	1		
Festival Areas	1		
Total	96		96

studies teaching within undergraduate programs, shares both commonalities and distinctions when compared to these studies.

The results of our research reveal that teacher candidates clearly differentiated between out-of-class in-school learning environments and out-of-school learning environments. They also expressed no objections to the idea that the concept of out-of-class could encompass the notion of out-of-school. The greater diversity in responses to the first question among social studies teacher candidates, as compared

to primary school teacher candidates, can be attributed to their exposure to a more extensive range of field education courses focused of "social studies teaching" within their undergraduate education programmes. In the study, it was seen that the examples of out-of-class in-school learning spaces presented by both groups of teacher candidates showed a wide variety. All teacher candidates shared a total of 38 different examples. This can be explained by the fact that the teacher candidates adopted the understanding that the social studies course can offer a wide range of application

perspectives for the teacher. Both groups highlighted the importance of the schoolyard, library and canteen as examples of out-of-class learning environments, specifically relating to the “people, places, and environments; culture and heritage; production, distribution, consumption; active citizenship” learning domains. Schoolyards provide students valuable outdoor experiences, enabling them to make observations, engage in interactive activities, play games, and enjoy themselves while learning. Avcı and Gümüş (2020) suggest that schoolyard should be functionalized by organising them as learning environments. It is obvious that the teacher candidates participating in our study also have the idea that the schoolyard can be used as a learning environment. In this case, it is necessary to think that schools in our country are not merely physical structures but also include encompass a comprehensive educational ecosystem with all its environments.

Another noticeable result of our research is that teacher candidates tend to make ‘subject-based’ associations rather than learning domain in the curriculum associations they propose for out-of-class environments. We can say that the number of examples shared, corresponding to various learning domains, within a single learning environment remained below our expectations. Furthermore, we observed that teacher candidates tended to provide single classifications instead of presenting these learning environments alongside different learning domains or disciplines. In essence, most teacher candidates provided a single learning domain example for each learning environment. This suggests that teacher candidates may struggle to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective when considering such learning environments.

In the associations drawn between out-of-school learning and social studies learning domains shared by both groups, it was observed that the learning domains of “culture and heritage; people, places and environments; individual and society; and production, distribution and consumption” were the prominent examples respectively. However, social studies teacher candidates could not give any examples related to the learning domain of “global connections”. It is noteworthy that the same teacher candidates could not give an example of an association in this learning domain for out-of-class learning environments. However, people and society of our age lead a cross-border life. In the context of 21st century skills, it is thought-provoking that it cannot be given as an example for a learning domain such as global connections. On the other hand, primary school teacher candidates could not provide examples for out-of-school learning environments related to the learning domains of “science, technology and society; active citizenship and global connections”. We think that this situation indicates that primary school teacher candidates do not have a strong academic competence in social studies teaching.

The results of our research indicates that teacher candidates from both groups most frequently mentioned “museums, historical sites, excursions, national parks and zoos” in terms of out-of-school learning environments.

The teacher candidates pointed out that museums can be used effectively, especially in the teaching of history subjects, and that they can be associated with the learning domain of ‘culture and heritage’. Ata (2015), who has made important studies on the place of museums in social studies education in the literature, emphasized that social studies teachers should take a museum education course. He especially emphasized that “history museums” (Ata, 2019) and “thematic museums and places: e.g., Nikola Tesla Museum” (Ata, 2017) can provide an effective out-of-school learning experience. In addition, examples of out-of-school learning environments such as “nursing home, orphanage, community centre, symposium, martyrdom” were among the examples of social studies teacher candidates that differed from the other group. In contrast, primary school teacher candidates offered examples like “botanical garden, aquarium, planetarium, and recycling centre” which also set them apart from the other group. However, it was observed that they struggled to establish connections between these diverse learning environments and specific learning areas or subjects within the social studies curriculum. These distinct examples from both groups support the assertion that the social studies course encompasses content applicable across all facets of society. Collectively, the teacher candidates gave a total of 41 different out-of-school learning environments examples. This situation suggests that teacher candidates have the idea that education and training can be carried out in places outside of school.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the following two main outcomes of our research are noteworthy. Firstly, both teacher candidates were able to share a rich list of examples about out-of-class learning environments. And they were able to categorize these examples as “out-of-class in-school” and “out-of-school” learning environments without causing any conceptual confusion. Although this was seen as a positive result, we noticed that they had significant difficulties when they were asked to relate these examples to their own fields; that is, to social studies teaching in terms of “learning domains or subject” in the second stage of the research. The association examples given by most of the teacher candidates were able to present a limited framework. In other words, teacher candidates could not provide a detailed explanation or exemplification in the process of field association. Another point is that the examples of teacher candidates’ associations for out-of-class in-school learning environments presented stronger outputs than those for out-of-school learning environments. Based on this result, it can be assumed that teacher candidates perceived the out-of-class in-school learning areas as more useful and accessible. The second noteworthy outcomes in our research is the relatively lower proficiency of primary school teacher candidates when compared to social studies teacher candidates, both in terms of the overall scope of learning environment understanding and specific field associations (integration). The total count of examples and

associations provided by classroom teacher candidates in both categories of out-of-school learning environments fell considerably short of those presented by social studies teacher candidates. We attribute this discrepancy to the fact that primary school teacher candidates only underwent a 3-hour course in social studies education during their undergraduate programs.

We think that it would be appropriate to share the following suggestions for researchers and educators in terms of the main outcomes of our research: We believe it would be very important to give more attention to the issue of learning environments outside the classroom within the scope of social studies field education and to follow a practice-based teaching approach, especially in “out-of-class in-school learning environments”. Teacher candidates will have relatively easy access to these learning environments within the school setting, often without the need for formal procedures. Consequently, it is important to acknowledge that this perspective can significantly enhance teachers' capacity to cultivate a more enriched learning environment within the context of social studies courses. In addition, as researchers, we would like to make the following suggestion for future research: In order to remove the confusion of the concept of learning environments, we think it would be more appropriate to consider the concept of “out-of-class learning environments” to cover all learning environments outside the classroom, rather than addressing this issue with different concepts as we mentioned in the literature section. In addition, the limitations of the research we have presented here should also be taken into consideration. Therefore, in-depth qualitative research can be conducted with a larger sample of teachers and teacher candidates.

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