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## **An Analysis of 21st-Century Skills Knowledge and Experiences of Primary School Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

21st century skills can be considered a tool to facilitate students' lives and prepare them for the world of the future. In this context, teachers' knowledge and experience of 21st century skills will be effective in solving possible problems that students will experience and in turning them into socially accepted, active, questioning, self-sufficient, well-equipped, determined, harmonious, social, and qualified individuals. In this study, phenomenological research design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The study group for the research consisted of 26 primary school teachers working in Balikesir. In the study, criterion sampling and maximum variation sampling methods, which are purposive sampling methods, were used. In the 4th Grade Social Studies course, teachers' experiences regarding how 21st century skills are perceived by teachers and how they are reflected in the program were collected by interview method. Content analysis was used in the analysis of the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. In this study, interview questions were evaluated in three different skill groups. Among the findings of the study, teachers see themselves as inadequate in "entrepreneurship" and "project management" and in parallel, they place less emphasis on activities for the development of these skills in students in the social studies program; they mostly find themselves in "Empathy", "Lifelong learning", "Problem Solving and Decision-Making." However, they mentioned the inadequacy of today's education system in acquiring skills because the curriculum is intense, resources or textbooks do not support skill-based activities, and our assessment-evaluation approach is exam-oriented.

**Keywords:** 21st century skills, Social studies program, Primary school teachers

### **Introduction**

The idea of teaching students the abilities they will need to meet their present and future requirements in a globalizing environment is known as 21st-century learning. To understand modern society, we must know why students require these talents. It is clear that we are going through a process of globalization where having knowledge is no longer enough and those who do not know how to use the latest information are "out of the game." Teachers must instruct students in fundamental academic skills like reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as how to use information and communication technologies, solve complex problems, think critically, and be effective in both theory and practice, in order to meet the demands of the modern world (Vivekanandan, 2019). The implementation of this transition process depends heavily on teachers' capacity to incorporate these abilities into lessons, to plan activities that will help students develop these skills, and on the physical and cultural resources that schools have available to them. Education scholars and institutes have conducted numerous studies on 21st-century skills in tandem with their interest in teaching and mastering these abilities. The Twenty-First Century Education Commission was founded by UNESCO in 1993. The publication "Learning: The Treasure Within Us" represents the notion that lifelong education is both a public and an individual right and good, evidencing the idea that lifelong education is both a public and an individual right and good. He assessed an effective educational system in this setting using the four criteria of learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. For the type of education that should be offered in the twenty-first century, he called attention to the social role of education and the ensuing balance between knowledge and action, between individual and social learning (Carneiro & Draxler, 2008). It is possible to look at several illustrations of what these abilities are and how they are categorized. For instance, in 2016, the World Economic Forum divided the necessary skills for the 21st century into three categories—Basic Literacy,

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Competencies, and Character Traits—and sixteen (Basic Literacy: Literacy, Numeracy, Scientific Literacy, Information Literacy, Financial Literacy, Cultural and Civic Literacy; Competences: Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving, Creativity, Communication, Collaboration; Character Traits: Curiosity, Entrepreneurship, Constant Learning), respectively. Additionally, several organizations and educational institutions from all around the world have separately created frameworks for these talents. A strategic education initiative called "Framework for 21st Century Learning" is being carried out in 21 US states with the help of 33 institutions. The project seeks to provide students with the knowledge and abilities they'll need in both their present and future professional environments. Themes, important subjects, and talents were found in this situation. "21st-century support systems" are the foundation for all of these. The three headers that express the skills covered by the framework are further broken down into subheadings to provide further explanation. The three basic categories of information, media, and technology skills, life skills, and career skills are used to define skills. The four C's, or critical thinking, creativity, cooperation, and application of invention, are often used to identify learning and innovation skills. Information literacy, media literacy, and ICT literacy are subcategories of information, media, and technology skills. According to Gelen (2017) and the Framework for 21st Century Learning (2017), life and career skills include adaptability and flexibility, self-management and entrepreneurship, social and intercultural competence, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility. With the Partnership for 21st Century Abilities, the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS), one of the most significant organizations in the area of social studies education in the United States, aspires to equip social studies instructors and classrooms with 21st-century abilities. In this context, the content of social studies subjects including history, geography, civics, and economics was used to identify the key topics in the 21st-century learning framework. The 21st-century abilities contained in the learning framework were given the primary heading "global awareness" as well as the subheadings "financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurship literacy," "civic literacy," and "health literacy" (Yell & Box, 2008). The P21 framework defines global awareness and its associated subheadings as transdisciplinary topics of the 21st century (P21 framework definitions, 2015). Among the organizations and groups that categorize skills are "Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning (ASIA Society)", "Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills (ATCS)", and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). Additionally, it participates in international organizations like the OECD, EnGauge, and the European Union (Benek, 2019; Kılıç, 2022).

While there are extensive studies on 21st-century skills in the world, the first study conducted in Turkey in this context is the study to determine the 21st-century teacher profile. In this study, "What is the current student profile in secondary education in the 21st century, and what is expected to happen?. Questionnaires were sent to students, teachers, and administrators. 25,000 students, 10,900 teachers, and 1870 administrators participated in the surveys. Students indicated that 26.4% of them slightly agreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "the education system teaches students to respect people", 33.1% slightly agreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "the education system develops students' understanding of solidarity and benevolence", and 43.4% slightly agreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "the education system gives students the ability to solve problems on their own" (MEB (Ministry of National Education), 2011).

Following this work, curriculum updating, determining the 21st-century student profile, Fatih Project work, the Turkish Qualifications Framework, and the 2023 Vision document were among the activities related to qualifications and skills. The Turkish Qualifications Framework is a common national qualification framework that is planned in an integrated manner with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and shows the qualifications acquired at all levels of education and learning environments (Hamarat, 2019; TQF, 2016). The curricula in Turkey have been updated within the scope of the Turkish Qualifications Framework since 2017–2018; key competencies have been reflected in the curricula; and innovations have been introduced in the structure and functioning of the curricula, the basic philosophy of the program, the objectives of the program, the skills to be gained by the student, the concept of root values, and the measurement and evaluation approach (TTKB, 2017). In this context, it is important to see how 21st-century skills are reflected in the renewed social studies program and how teachers, who are the implementers of the program, follow a path while teaching these skills. Now, instead of rote knowledge, we need to have skills that allow us to use the information we can access from everywhere effectively and according to its purpose. In this context, first of all, the perceptions, opinions, experiences, and evaluations of our teachers, who guide the knowledge towards gaining these skills in students, and how they manage this process that takes place in the 21st century, are important. This study aims to reveal the knowledge and experiences of MEB regarding 21st-century skills. In line with this purpose, it is aimed at investigating how primary school teachers try to develop 21st-century skills in students within the scope of 4th-grade social studies program achievements and activities. Determining the presence of 21st-century skills in the programs is considered important in terms of showing our competence in following the qualitative changes in education. In this context, the social studies program is considered a tool reflecting the study.

The views of teachers, who are the practitioners of 21st-century skills, on 21st-century skills, their knowledge and experiences, and their ability to evaluate the education system in terms of skills reflect the main purpose of the study. In the literature, the classifications of 21st-century skills in P21, ISTE, EU, and OECD are mostly

encountered. In this study, the 4th-grade social studies curriculum was examined based on the views of primary school teachers in terms of the most well-known skills in P21, the skills revealed by Doğan (2020) after his master's study, and the skills in the MEB social studies curriculum (2018).

In this study, which examines the knowledge and experiences of primary school teachers regarding 21st-century skills, answers to the following research questions are sought:

1. What are the opinions of primary school teachers about 21st-century skills?
2. What are the opinions of primary school teachers about the P21 Learning Framework?
3. What are the opinions of primary school teachers about the inclusion of skills in the social studies program?

## Method

Phenomenological research design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in this study, in which the knowledge and experiences of primary school teachers regarding 21st-century skills were examined. Phenomenology is the description of a phenomenon in terms of the experiences of a particular group. Researchers try to understand the world of each participant. The phenomenological research method asks each participant to describe their own experiences in their own terms (Christensen, Burke, Johnson, & Turner, 2015, p. 408–409). Phenomenology is not just a description; it also involves an interpretive process in which the researcher interprets the meaning of the experiences (Creswell, 2018). The researcher collects data from people who experience the phenomenon and develops a unified description of the essence of the experience for all individuals. This definition includes "what" they experience and "how" they experience it (Moustakas, 1994). Accordingly, in this study, the knowledge and experiences of primary school teachers about 21st-century skills were revealed using a phenomenological research design. In this context, in the content of the research, the opinions of primary school teachers about what 21st century skills are, the methods they use to develop these skills in students, and how they integrate them into their lessons within the framework of the social studies program were investigated. In accordance with the phenomenological research pattern, what they experience and how they are handled within the framework of 21st century skills.

## Study Group

The study group consisted of 26 primary school teachers working in Balıkesir province in the first semester of the 2022–2023 academic year. In the study, in which only primary school teachers from private and public schools in the Karesi and Altıeylül districts of Balıkesir province participated, criterion sampling and maximum diversity sampling methods were used. The criterion for participation in this study was that the teachers were primary school teachers, were teaching 4th-grade classes, or had previously taught the social studies course in 4th grade. In this study, 21st-century skills were investigated in the social studies course, which started for the first time in the 4th grade. Therefore, the criteria were determined as the grade level (4th grade) and being a primary school teacher. In terms of maximum diversity, primary school teachers working in public and private schools in Altıeylül and Karesi districts in the provincial center of Balıkesir province were reached, and diversity was tried to be ensured in the inclusion process based on criteria such as the region, professional experience, gender, and working in private or public schools. The participants in the research work in 8 different primary schools (4 public and 4 private). Fifteen male teachers and 11 female teachers were included in the study.

## Data Collection Tools

The researcher created a semi-structured interview form that was employed in the study as a means of gathering qualitative data. Semi-structured interview formats, in accordance with Merriam (2018), give participants the freedom to explain how they see the world. Since the research group's perceptions of 21st-century abilities and their inclusion of these skills in the social studies course were evaluated based on their own claims, it was deemed appropriate to employ the semi-structured interview form as a data-gathering instrument. Three subject matter experts who work in the primary school teaching department and two subject matter experts who work in the social studies teaching department were consulted regarding the form's content validity. The 20 interview questions that were originally planned were reduced to 15 as a consequence of the expert opinion, and the interview form was then finished. The interview form's questions, according to field professionals in primary school education and social studies education, were clear and pertinent to the study. The research also took into account the 21st-century skills included in the MEB social studies curriculum, the skills found in the P21 learning framework, and the skills found in Doğan's (2020) study. The interview questions below were used to elicit information from instructors regarding how 21st-century abilities are viewed by them in the 4th grade Social Studies course and how they are reflected in the curriculum.

[illegible]

Figure 1. Interview Form Regarding Primary School Teachers' Knowledge and Experiences on 21st-Century Skills

## Data Collection

The data obtained from the study was collected through face-to-face interviews with 26 primary school teachers. The data collection tool in Figure 1 was used during the interviews. Data collection continued until the end of the 2022–2023 academic year. Data collection continued until the end of the 2022-2023 academic year. Before starting the interviews, the purpose of the research was explained to the participants, and examples of 21st-century skills from the 4th grade Social Studies Program or P21 learning framework were given. The consent statements of the participants before the research about whether they would participate in the research were recorded on a voice recorder. All interviews were conducted at their schools at a time of their preference for the teachers to be able to express their experiences about 21st-century skills openly and clearly, not to feel any time pressure during the interview, and to be more comfortable. After obtaining the consent of the participants, the interviews were recorded using a voice recorder. The interviews ranged from approximately 45 minutes to 80 minutes.

## Data Analysis

The researcher used a computer to translate the transcripts of the interviews into a 30-page interview text. The qualitative information gathered from the interviews was examined through the technique of content analysis. The goal of content analysis is to group related information into themes and then organize and interpret it in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). Direct quotations were occasionally incorporated into the analysis of the interview data in accordance with the established themes and codes. According to a study by Joseph Maxwell (2005, cited in Christensen, Burke, Johnson, & Turner, 2015), validity techniques employed in qualitative research will be taken into consideration. For descriptive validity in the research, researcher diversity was taken into account. The participants were informed of the analyses' interpretive validity, or whether they were consistent with their point of view. Direct quotations from the participants statements were used in the study. Coders regularly held meetings to ensure the validity of the research. The Miles and Huberman (1994) formula was used to calculate the dependability between the coders, which was found to be .92. The outcome of this study was regarded as reliable.

## Findings

## Demographic Findings

A total of 26 primary school teachers working in Balıkesir city center participated in the study. Sixteen of these primary school teachers work in public schools affiliated with the Balıkesir Ministry of National Education, and 10 of them work in private schools. In the study, attention was paid to providing diversity in terms of data sources. In this context, primary school teachers working in public and private schools in Altieylül and Karesi districts in the province center of Balıkesir were reached, and diversity was tried to be ensured in the inclusion process based on criteria such as region, professional experience, gender, and working in private or public schools. The participants in the research worked in 8 different primary schools (4 public and 4 private). Fifteen male teachers and 11 female teachers were included in the study. Of the 26 teachers who participated in the study, 18 were primary school teachers with "26 years or more of professional experience", 2 were teachers with

"between 21 and 25 years of professional experience", 3 were teachers with "between 16 and 20 years of professional experience", 2 were teachers with "between 11 and 15 years of professional experience" and 1 was a teacher with "between 6 and 10 years of professional experience". All of the teachers who participated in the study were teachers who were teaching fourth-grade students per the purpose of the study and had previously taught the social studies course in the fourth grade.

Demographic information about the twenty-six (26) primary school teachers who participated in the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information about the participants

Categories	Demographic Features	f	%
Type of Institution	Private	10	38.46
	Public	16	61.53
	Total	26	100
Gender	Woman	11	42.30
	Man	15	57.69
	Total	26	100
Professional Experience Period	6-10 year	1	3.84
	11-15 year	2	7.69
	16-20 year	3	11.53
	21-25 year	2	7.69
	26 year and above	18	69.23
	Total	26	100

#### Findings for the First Interview Question

Among the interview questions, 16 of the participants (61.53%) answered "no" to the question "Have you heard the expression "21st Century Skills" before?". All of the primary school teachers who said that they had never heard of these skills before were teachers with 26 years or more of professional experience. 10 (38.46%) primary school teachers stated that they had heard this expression.

#### Findings for the Second Interview Question

When the 10 primary school teachers who stated that they had heard the expression "21st Century Skills" before were asked to explain what this expression was, 7 teachers (70%) tried to explain this expression by using the concept of "technology" and were able to define 21st Century Skills only as "technological developments". Three teachers (30%) were able to diversify their definitions not only with the concept of technology but also by drawing attention to different skills. The views of the primary school teachers are given below. It is noteworthy that there are a high number of teachers who associate it with the concept of technology.

*P14. Technological development, innovation, productivity, and efficiency come to mind.*

*P16. I think of technology-related things such as media literacy and computers.*

*P9. Mastering computers and technology, electronic media come to mind.*

*P13. Creative and critical thinking, reasoning, and media literacy come to mind, and we are already applying them.*

#### Findings for the Third Interview Question

Another question asked to the primary school teachers was "Have you heard of the 21st Century Learning Framework before?". This framework, which has been widely used in other countries in the world, especially in the USA, includes the skills, knowledge, and competencies that students should have to be successful in work and life. While no one among the pre-service primary school teachers had heard of this framework before, one of them only answered yes but could not give information about its content.

#### Findings for the Fourth Interview Question

Before posing this question, the 21st Century Skills and the 21st Century Learning Framework were mentioned, and the table about the skills in the MEB social studies program was shared with our primary school teachers so that they would be informed. 4. The research question "Which skills in the 4th-grade social studies program that you think are related to 21st Century Skills, can you explain?" was posed to the primary school teachers who are currently teaching the fourth grade. 20 out of 26 primary school teachers (76.92%) stated that all the skills in the MEB social studies curriculum should be acquired for 4th-grade students, while they stated "critical thinking", "empathy", "social participation", "problem solving", research, and "entrepreneurship" as the most important skills, especially for students at their grade level. The opinions of primary school teachers are given below.

P25. I think they are all related... I use **critical thinking, empathy, and entrepreneurship** skills, among the most related ones and the ones I use the most.

P14. As much as we can, I especially emphasize **empathy and research skills** because I think research is very valuable in social studies lessons.

P21. Although we generally work on developing all 21st-century skills, I can say that the skill we especially emphasize is **empathy**. Because I observe that after the student gains this skill, all his or her behaviors and life change in general. Therefore, I think empathy is a very important skill.

#### Findings for the Fifth Interview Question

Regarding the question "Do you teach 21st Century Skills in the Social Studies course?", all primary school teachers stated that they use these skills when appropriate and under the characteristics of the subjects and outcomes.

P18. Yes, of course, I emphasize all of these skills when appropriate.

P4. Yes. We use these skills in our lessons, but we do not teach them under the name of 21st Century Skills. We make them acquire them as normal skills.

#### Findings for the Sixth Interview Question

Teachers who said that they teach 21st century skills in social studies classes were asked how they did this and were asked to give examples. The thoughts of the primary school teachers were divided into nine categories based on their responses to this question. The teachers emphasized the value of using the brainstorming process when teaching the social studies course's skills, particularly to fourth-graders. They provided examples of how to have students ask questions as they learned these abilities and use leading questions to make sure they achieved their goals. It was noted that a total of 11 primary school instructors provided examples of how to use the abilities in relation to the results when describing them. By utilizing generic terms, 15 primary school teachers contributed to the creation of categories. Six of the eleven primary school teachers that provided examples discussed the challenges associated with achieving the outcome "SB.4.2.4. Understands the importance of the National Struggle based on the lives of the National Struggle Heroes" and provided examples of how to improve in this area. These abilities were attained through the use of technology, tangible materials, and song-based instruction. Within the context of the outcome "SB.4.2.1. Conducts a family history study by utilizing oral, written, and visual sources and objects," three primary school teachers said that they taught students skills through conducting interviews. Inferences were made about the location of any site in the surroundings by two primary school teachers. They claimed that they taught students the abilities listed under the category of brainstorming and the subsection of asking questions.

Table 2. Teacher opinions on how 21st-century skills are taught

Category	Sub-Category	f
Brain storming	Getting them to think	3
	Ask questions	2
Enabling them to benefit from technology	Watch the Youtube video	2
	Using Web 2.0 tools	1
	Watching videos on Eba	1
Doing project work		2
Make a drama		3
Teach with song		1
Make an interview		2
Make research		3
Using tangible material	make use of a map	1
	make use of the globe	1
Just explanation		4
Total		26

#### 21st-century skills in teaching 21st-century skills to students based on examples of achievements

"SB.4.2.4. Understands the importance of the National Struggle based on the lives of the heroes of the National Struggle." Examples related to the learning outcome

P6. For example, for the National Struggle topic, **we started with a song**. I had sent songs specific to that topic. I looked at them and moved on to practical things. For example, **on the map of Turkey**, who occupied which

regions, which regions, and which provinces do we have? They learned that with that song, they could show it immediately. That's how we started. Now we will move on to the front.

"SB.4.2.1. Conducts a family history study using oral, written, and visual sources and objects." Examples related to the acquisition

P7. While teaching the outcome "Conducts a family history study", **we interviewed** the elders of the family and used oral history. We compared their birth dates and the age at which they started school, and we asked "Which one is older, earlier, or later".

"SB.4.3.1. Makes inferences about the location of any place around him or her." Examples related to the learning outcome

P11. In terms of directions, I went right, then left, then forward and backward. **I ask questions like**, "Where was my home then? Where am I located? What comes to mind when you think of directions?" **and make them think**. I use the **brainstorming technique**.

### Views of teachers explaining 21st-century skills based on skills in teaching 21st-century skills to students

#### Critical Thinking Skills

P21. First of all, I encourage my students to think and question. I emphasize that they should not believe every piece of information they hear and that they should question; therefore, I emphasize **critical thinking**.

#### Empathy Skills

P25. We try not to make our friends who are different feel bad, try to comprehend differences, develop **empathy skills**, convey a sense of justice between people, and prevent someone from being wronged. We make sure that everyone has a say in every lesson. Everyone can speak their mind in our class.

#### Environmental Literacy Skills

P26. As an example of environmental literacy, I explain the importance of recycling, global warming, climate, the use of raw materials, and their dimensions by associating them with daily life. I explain the food and water problems in the world from educational and economic perspectives. I use **direct narration** according to the subject.

### Findings for the Seventh Interview Question

In response to the question, "Which of the 4C skills included in the 21st-century learning framework in the Social Studies program do you do the most activities for teaching? Can you give an example?" It was revealed that the primary school teachers stated that they mostly did activities for teaching critical thinking and problem-solving skills (f:18), followed by cooperation (f:11), communication (f:8), and creative thinking and innovation (f:2). Teachers stated that they mostly conducted activities to develop students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The fact that only two opinions of primary school teachers exist on teaching creative thinking and innovation skills may limit our children, who will shape the future, from being useful for society with their new ideas and original products in the future.

Table 3. Primary school teachers' views on the teaching of 4C skills in the social studies course

4C Skills in the 21st Century Learning Framework	f
1. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills	18
2. Creative Thinking and Innovation Skills	2
3. Communication Skills	8
4. Cooperation Skills	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

#### Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

P6. We work on developing critical thinking skills. We started the First World War from Çanakkale, why were we invaded? We made the connection "Children, there have been attacks recently. Our country is very attractive in terms of location. We had enemies against our country who were constantly trying to take it, trying to create chaos; there were enemies then and there are enemies today." We showed a photograph, and we dwelled on the ships coming to Istanbul during the occupation. We talked about the bomb in İstiklal with the children. That bomb that was detonated in İstiklal and in 1918 when those ships arrived in the country had the same aim: creating chaos. "Those children didn't do anything to anyone, why are they doing such a thing?" I try to constantly compare the present and the past. There is problem-solving. For example, we cover the topic of nutrients and why obesity occurs. The child finds the problem: "It would be better if he ate this; he wouldn't gain weight like this" or "Our friend's arm was broken on vacation, what should we do for Tolga's arm to heal quickly? What should happen?" Children are always interested in any part of the subject.



### **Creative Thinking and Innovation Skills**

P3. *Creative thinking and Applying innovation When a child thinks differently than the class and me, I reward him or her. Because he or she has thought about what we cannot see or think. I emphasize this. The work I give the student is usually individual.*

### **Communication Skills**

P22. *I think communication is a very important skill, and I try to emphasize it because I find it very important for them to socialize because of their age. I find it very valuable for their future lives that the communication they establish with their families and their environment is of high quality. For example, we have foreign students in almost every class now (immigrant students), and it is very valuable to have strong communication skills to connect with those students. For these reasons, the skill I emphasize the most at the moment is communication.*

### **Cooperation Skills**

P13. *When we are going to do an activity, I say, "Let's think among ourselves; let these three people think among themselves, and let one of them be the speaker." I give group assignments on national struggle and our culture of cooperation. We do this both in social studies and other lessons.*

### **Findings for the Eighth Interview Question**

In response to the question "Which of the information, media, and technology skills included in the 21st-century learning framework in the Social Studies program do you do the most activities for teaching? Can you give an example?" It was revealed that most of the primary school teachers (f: 21) expressed the opinion that they were doing practices for teaching Information and Communication Technology literacy. The general point expressed by the teachers is that they try to teach this skill to students by using technology as a tool rather than teaching technology production. In this context, it was seen that they used online platforms such as EBA, YouTube, Morpa Campus, or web 2.0 tools as examples of developing information and communication technology literacy in lessons. It was determined that they expressed the least number of opinions (f: 2) and gave examples of activities for media literacy.

Table 4. Primary school teachers' views on the teaching of Information, Media, and Technology Skills in the social studies course

Information, Media, and Technology Skills in the 21st century learning framework	f
1. Information Literacy	8
2. Media Literacy	2
3. Information and Communication Technology Literacy	21
Total	31

### **Information Literacy**

P2. *The information literacy we are focusing on the most at the moment is information literacy, or processing information. I pay attention to the fact that they can benefit from different sources and interpret the information they obtain from these different sources.*

### **Media Literacy**

P13. *As media literacy, before starting a program, we gave terms and symbols such as "suitable for a general audience, suitable for ages 18 and above..." We talked about basic media information and did not do anything more detailed.*

### **Information and Communication Technologies Literacy**

P9. *We use information and communication technology literacy. We use the smart board and EBA. Since there is enough content, I do not produce content myself; I use ready-made content in the form of digital games from Wordwall. Students do not produce content either, and I do not do anything for them to produce.*

### **Findings for the Ninth Interview Question**

In response to the question "Which of the life and career skills included in the 21st-century learning framework in the Social Studies program do you do the most activities for teaching life and career skills? Can you give an example?", It was revealed that most of the primary school teachers (f: 12) stated that they mostly did practices for teaching social and intercultural skills. It is seen that teachers generally attribute the reason for this situation to the fact that immigrant children who took refuge in Turkey from Syria in 2011 due to the war took refuge in their classrooms. They stated that they emphasized more on teaching social and intercultural skills due to the

high number of children coming to Turkey from various countries and receiving education in our classrooms. It is also noteworthy that there are opinions (f: 4) stating that they use all the skills defined under life and career skills in the social studies teaching course. Primary school teachers expressed only one opinion about entrepreneurship and self-direction skills. It was determined that they could not give an example of this skill in the social studies course.

Table 5. Primary school teachers' views on the teaching of life and career skills in the social studies course

Life and Career Skills in the 21st Century Learning Framework	f
1. Flexibility and Adaptability	3
2. Entrepreneurship and Self-direction	1
3. Social and Intercultural Skills	12
4. Productivity and Responsibility	5
5. Leadership	5
6. All	4
Total	32

### ***Flexibility and Adaptability***

*P1. I point out that they should respect each other in all their work about flexibility and adaptation.*

### ***Entrepreneurship and Self-direction***

*P12. I use entrepreneurship and self-direction skills.*

### ***Social and Intercultural Skills***

*P13. I do activities for social and intercultural skills. There are many foreign students in our school; there are seven in my class. When we talk about our cultural heritage, we ask them, "What do you do? What kind of food do you cook? What are your weddings like?" and make them talk and integrate it into the form of questions and answers.*

### ***Productivity and Responsibility***

*P23. I especially want my students to be equipped with productive skills for their country and to have some citizenship responsibilities. At the same time, I care a lot about issues such as what our personal and social rights are, what our freedoms are, and what our responsibilities are towards ourselves, our families, and our country, so I emphasize these issues.*

### ***Leadership***

*P19. I use leadership skills more. When children talk to elders about the subject, I enable them to comprehend the behaviors of a leader and gain this skill by hearing or maybe seeing what they do.*

### ***All of them***

*P8. We usually use all of these skills together while teaching.*

### **Findings for the Tenth Interview Question**

Primary school teachers were asked the question, "Which of the skills in the Social Studies program do you think are dysfunctional? Explain your reasons by giving examples." Among the answers given, it was concluded that they mostly saw political literacy (f:14), financial literacy (f:13), and legal literacy (f:11) skills as dysfunctional. In this context, it is seen that the primary school teachers stated that the skills they expressed remained high-level skills when the grade and age levels of primary school children were considered.

Table 6. Primary school teachers' views on the skills they see as dysfunctional in the social studies program

Skills Considered to be Dysfunctional in the Social Studies Program	f
Political Literacy	14
Financial Literacy	13
Legal Literacy	11
Map Literacy	4
Location Analysis	4
Using Evidence	2
No dysfunctional skills	2
Total	50

*P6. Financial literacy and political literacy are dysfunctional. That's why the primary school level is not appropriate. Maybe a little earlier for financial literacy. It may be difficult to explain political literacy. We may not be able to get into it much in primary school; it may be a bit of a problem for us.*

*P7. I find financial literacy, political literacy, map literacy, legal literacy, using evidence, and location analysis dysfunctional because they are high-level and abstract.*

### Findings for the 11th Interview Question

Primary school teachers were asked the question, "Which of the 21st-century skills in the social studies program are more important for children's adaptation to the age?" Among the answers given, digital literacy (f:16), problem-solving (f:12), and critical thinking (f:11) skills were considered most important by teachers in terms of children's adaptation to the age.

Table 7. Primary school teachers' views on the skills in the social studies program that they see as appropriate for the age we live in

Skills Considered Appropriate for the Age We Live in the Social Studies Program	f
Digital Literacy	16
Problem solving	12
Critical Thinking	11
Empathy	8
Observation	7
Innovative Thinking	6
Research	4
Environmental Literacy	4
Total	68

*P8. Digital literacy, information, and communication technologies: there are new developments in information and communication technologies, and it is necessary to know and apply this to catch up with the future. It is necessary to look closely; it is a current issue, not a traditional one.*

*P11. When I think about it now, I can say that digital literacy and innovative thinking skills are very important in terms of adaptability to the age. Also, in the field of innovative thinking, I think it is very important for our students to develop a mental state about what the new generation can contribute to us rather than what has happened in the past and what has been done in the past. I think it would be very useful in our country to think about what we can do and what we can produce rather than what has happened in the past, and I care that my students are open to development in this regard.*

*P5. Critical thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, and empathy skills are important in terms of adaptation to the age.*

### Findings for the 12th Interview Question

In response to the question, "Do you find the achievements in the social studies program sufficient in terms of reflecting 21st-century skills? Yes/No If your answer is no, why?" Eight primary school teachers answered "Yes" and stated that they found them sufficient, while 18 primary school teachers answered "No" and stated that they did not find them sufficient. Of the 18 people who answered "No", 9 primary school teachers explained the reasons as the intensity of the curriculum, 4 primary school teachers as the insufficiency of physical facilities, 3 primary school teachers as the lack of high-level skills in the acquisitions, and 2 primary school teachers as the lack of time.

Table 8. Primary school teachers' opinions on the adequacy of the achievements in the social studies program in terms of reflecting 21st-century skills

Do you find the achievements in the social studies program sufficient in terms of reflecting 21st-century skills?	f
Yes	8
No	18
Total	26

Table 9. Reasons why primary school teachers find the achievements in the social studies program insufficient for 21st-century skills

Reasons for Finding Insufficient Achievements in the Social Studies Program	f
Curriculum density	9
Lack of physical facilities	4
Lack of high-level skills	3

lack of time	2
Total	18

P17. *I think it is a burden brought about by the intensity of the curriculum. Because I think that the social studies course is also very intensive in its framework and other courses are also very intensive in the same way, we cannot take into account the individual differences of children, especially due to the high class sizes, and an education system that seems constructive but is teacher-centered is realized.*

P10. *No, I think the curriculum is too intense. For example, the subject of the National Struggle contains heavy learning outcomes for 4th-grade students, and the learning outcomes are generally too intense; they should be lightened. I studied these while preparing for KPSS. We cannot breathe while explaining them; we should slow down and explain them.*

### Findings for the 13th Interview Question

Primary school teachers were given the following list of 21st-century skills and asked which skills they thought they had. In this context, the skills that the primary school teachers think they have the most are Empathy (f:14), Lifelong Learning (f:9), Problem-Solving and Decision-Making (f:8), Reasoning (f:8), and Communication Skills (f:8).

**Table 10. Primary school teachers' Opinions on 21st-Century Skills**

21st Century Skills List	f
1. Reasoning	8
2. Information and Communication Technologies Literacy	4
3. Information Literacy	2
4. Conflict Management and Resolution	2
5. Language Skills (Using Turkish Correctly and Using a Foreign Language at a Basic Level)	2
6. Nature Literacy	7
7. Empathy	14
8. Flexibility and Adaptability	3
9. Critical Thinking	7
10. Entrepreneurship	1
11. Visual Literacy	3
12. Lifelong Learning	9
13. Effective Use of Resources	3
14. Communication Skills	8
15. Cooperation	5
16. Media Literacy	4
17. Learning to Learn	6
18. Self-Assessment	2
19. Self Regulation	2
20. Self-Esteem	2
21. Self Presentation	2
22. Self-Efficacy	2
23. Self-Management	2
24. Planning	3
25. Problem Solving and Decision Making	8
26. Project Management	1
27. Productivity-Efficiency	2
28. Creativity-Innovation	3
29. National and Universal Citizenship	3
30. Time Management	1
Total	121

P24. *Again, emphasizing that all of them are very important individually, I can say that the skill that I think is more essential and that I have is **empathy**.*

P11. *I go to the bağlama course as **lifelong learning**. Effective and efficient use of resources and cooperation have developed in me.*

P15. ***Reasoning, empathy, flexibility and adaptability, critical thinking, and problem-solving.** I used to perceive criticism as bad, but I am more aware of this issue. As a society, we think criticism is bad. I am open to learning how to learn. I tell our vice principal to open courses for us for **lifelong learning**. I want choral and folk dance activities for teachers.*

### Findings for the 14th Interview Question

In response to the question "Which of the 21st Century Skills do you think you lack?", primary school teachers stated that they could not use a foreign language at a basic level (f:18), which is included in language skills. After that, they stated that they did not find themselves sufficient in Information Communication Technology literacy (f:15), Entrepreneurship (f:11), or Project Management (f:8) respectively.

Table 11. Primary school teachers' views on the 21st-century skills they lack

Skills	f
Language Skills (Using a Foreign Language at a Basic Level)	18
Information Communication Technologies Literacy	15
entrepreneurship	11
Project management	8
Creativity-Innovation	5
Productivity-Efficiency	4
Time management	4
Conflict Management and Resolution	3
Planning	3
Effective Use of Resources	2
Total	73

*P16. I think I need to improve my **language skills**. Although I have traveled abroad, I have had a lot of difficulty with the language, and I find myself insufficient in this regard.*

*P9. My **technology literacy, foreign language, and productivity skills** are weak. It is weak because I give more importance to face-to-face education than digital education. I am not overly interested in digital; I use it enough. I am not overly interested in digital, I use it enough. I could be a little more productive.*

*P20. I am also insufficient in **project management**; the project is a gamified reinforcement tool for me. The priority is to finish the subject, then the project can be given.*

*P5. **Time management**: sometimes the time is not enough because I go out of the curriculum during the lesson. **Using resources effectively, information and communication technology literacy**. I do not use tools like Canva; I do not produce.*

### Findings for the 15th Interview Question

In response to the question "Is today's education system sufficient to provide 21st-century skills? Can you explain your thoughts?", six primary school teachers answered sufficiently, while 20 primary school teachers stated that they found today's education system insufficient to provide 21st-century skills. In addition, four of the six teachers who stated that it is sufficient emphasized that it also depends on the teacher and the educational environment. When the 20 teachers who thought it was insufficient were asked about the reason for this situation, it was seen that they gave 54 opinions, and the reason for this insufficiency is mostly attributed to the exam system. Teachers mentioned that they tried to do skill-based activities, but due to the intensity of the program (f:7), the fact that the resources or textbooks do not support skill-based activities (f:7), and the fact that our understanding of measurement and evaluation is exam-oriented (f:8), today's education system is inadequate for gaining skills. In addition, the inadequacy of schools and classrooms in terms of equipment in terms of implementing skill-based activities while implementing the program (f:6); not associating the social studies program with other disciplinary areas, and teaching lessons with traditional methods that are far from project-based understanding (f:5) are among the reasons cited for the inadequacy of the system.

Table 12. Primary school teachers' opinions on the adequacy of today's education system in providing skills

Is today's education system sufficient to provide 21st-century skills?	f
Yes	6
No	20
Total	26

Table 13. Primary school teachers' opinions on the reasons why they find today's education system inadequate in providing skills

Why is today's education system inadequate in providing skills?	f
Physical inadequacy of schools and classrooms	6
The busy schedule	7
Insufficient source books and textbooks	7

The interdisciplinary nature of the program	6
Inadequacy of teachers	4
Exam-oriented system approach	8
Not giving importance to branch lessons	2
Too many classes	4
Being away from a project-based education approach	5
Insufficient time to implement the program	3
Earnings not up to date	2
Total	54

P15. I can say that the curriculum and its **intensity** are one of the biggest problems. For example, I can see that students can be overloaded with historical information, and based on my experience, I can see that students always have problems in these subjects.

P14. It is not appropriate for us to **study for the exam** to gain skills in the program, but the child will take the scholarship exam at a private school, which contradicts this. If children establish good social relationships, brainstorm, and self-criticize, the system should change accordingly.

P3. I do not find it sufficient because I do not think that education is sufficient; I think that education is an area that needs to be constantly improved. However, I think that the system is already inadequate in the current situation due to the incompatibilities in our education system. In terms of gaining these skills, I think that the **interdisciplinary disconnection in the curriculum and intensive programs** that are not suitable for primary school are not suitable for students in the primary school period. Since there is no integrity in teaching in the social studies course, the teachings left to the initiative of the authors can create confusion in the students and cause unconsciousness. In this case, I think the **sourcebooks are not sufficient**.

P20. I do not find it sufficient; what we give is not in continuity. I find the **textbooks inadequate** if not much effort is made. For example, I want to give reinforcement in the process, but reinforcement is given at the end of the unit in the textbook. I do not have a problem with the teaching process, but we have problems with reinforcement. The process and reinforcement tools do not follow the same path. I tell stories by storytelling; it is asked as a test in the textbook. Activities and **project-based work are limited**.

## Conclusion

Teachers' perspectives on skills were investigated in three broad areas with the help of 15 interview questions in this study, which looked at the knowledge and experiences of primary school teachers on 21st-century skills. The first of these titles examines primary school teachers' perspectives on 21st-century skills, and it begins by asking the instructors whether they had ever heard the term "21st-century skills" before. It is surprising that none of our instructors, whether they work in private or public schools, had ever heard of this concept while having 26 years or more of professional experience. The researcher provided 16 teachers with examples to help clarify the meaning of this notion, which is regularly represented in updated programs, the Turkish Qualifications Framework, and the 2023 Vision document. More than half of the 10 teachers who were exposed to this idea could only describe the ideas of "technology" and "21st-century skills," but not interpersonal or interpersonal skills, which are referred to as "soft skills" in the literature (Vasanthakumari, 2019). A list of 30 talents created by Doan (2020) was presented to primary school teachers. The primary school teachers claimed that they believed they possessed the greatest levels of "Empathy," "Lifelong learning," "Problem-solving and decision-making," "Reasoning," and "Communication," but that they believed they lacked the skills of "Using a foreign language at a basic level," "Entrepreneurship," and "Project management." For instructors in our country's primary schools, foreign language proficiency is a significant issue. In general, primary school teachers and those who are considering becoming primary school teachers do not feel that they are adequate in this regard (Gönül, 2020; Genç & Kaya, 2011; Beyaztaş, 2017). In this investigation, similar outcomes were attained. According to Entürk (2021), "Entrepreneurship" is the ability to see opportunities based on the people around one and the capacity to develop novel solutions to economic or social challenges. A circumstance that fits with the research is that the majority of elementary school teachers do not believe they are competent in this area. According to research done in Turkey, primary school teachers do not feel that they are at a suitable level of professional competence or ability to teach kids this skill. It is advised that entrepreneurial courses be taught through undergraduate and graduate education programs (Akyürek & Şahin, 2013; Berk, 2009) in order to improve this competence in faculties of education. 21. Teaching with project-based learning and related teaching models (problem-based learning, active learning, etc.) that can encourage the development of more than one skill in students is problematic given that the majority of primary school teachers feel they lack this "project management" skill, which is frequently mentioned among the skills that should be included in the scope of 21st-century skills. According to studies in the literature, the project-based learning approach gives students the highest opportunities for collaboration, communication, research, productivity and efficiency, innovation

and creativity, motivation, and thinking and problem-solving abilities (Uysal, 2021). When asked whether the current educational system is adequate to teach 21st-century skills, the primary school teachers were asked one final question regarding it, and 20 out of 26 of them responded that they thought it was "insufficient". It is clear that the exam system is mostly to blame for this insufficiency. Teachers mentioned that they made an effort to implement skill-based activities but that the current educational system was insufficient for developing skills because of the intensity of the curriculum, the lack of resources or skill-based activities in the textbooks, and our understanding of measurement and evaluation, which is exam-oriented. Baras and Erdamar (2021) came to the same conclusions, finding that the repetition and outdated acquisitions; the low attractiveness of texts; the students' lack of critical thinking and problem-solving skills; the lack of physical infrastructure, material, and time; and the examination system's lack of a focus on measuring skills are the most significant issues encountered during the implementation of 21st-century skills. Cansoy (2018) said in his study that teachers hurry to impart knowledge since the educational system is mostly exam-focused, whereas 21st-century skills should be more student-oriented and used to reveal students' potential.

The second research title of the study is "The Views of Primary School Teachers on the P21 Learning Framework." In this context, primary school teachers were asked about the skills in the P21 learning framework and examples of their lesson activities on the teaching of these skills within the framework of the 4th-grade social studies program. Primary school teachers were asked whether they had heard of the P21 learning framework before, and it was determined that they had not heard of it except for one person. Afterward, the P21 learning framework was introduced, and the skills in the framework were explained to the primary school teachers to inform them. In this context, the primary school teachers stated that they use these skills in their classrooms and social studies lessons when necessary. It was revealed that the primary school teachers reported that they mostly practiced critical thinking and problem-solving skills, followed by cooperation, communication, creative thinking, and innovation implementation skills, respectively, in the social studies course, among the 4C skills in the P21 framework. As an example of these, they mentioned that they included activities to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in students while teaching the subject of "Period of National Struggle", which is seen as one of the more difficult subjects in the 4th grade. In this context, the primary school teachers stated that they used the brainstorming technique and tried to comprehend the situation of our country after the First World War with the question of why. They stated that they worked with groups for the same outcome in terms of cooperation skills. When the literature is examined, it is stated that communication, cooperation, creativity, and critical thinking skills are frequently mentioned as 4C skills, especially critical thinking, which also benefits from other skills such as communication and information literacy skills and includes analysis, interpretation, and evaluation (Chiruguru, 2020). In the 21st-century context, communication refers not only to the ability to communicate effectively orally, in writing, and through various digital means but also to listening skills. Many international frameworks include information and digital literacy in the concept of communication (British Department for Education, 2013). In the 21st century context, collaboration is associated with the ability to work in teams, to learn from others and contribute to others' learning, to use social networking skills and technology, as well as the ability to show empathy when working with different people (Kaplan, 2023). In this study, the skill of creative thinking and applying innovation, which is among the 4C skills of the P21 learning framework, was the one that teachers developed the least. Creativity is seen as an important skill in the teaching-learning process because of its contribution to the individual's coping with complex problems, satisfaction with life, and progress in professional development (Tezci et al., 2008). Creative thinking is also associated with generating new ideas that can be applied to the world. The creative thinking process involves a sequential scientific process that starts with the definition of the problem and continues with the evaluation and monitoring of ideas to produce new information through information gathering, selection of concepts, and conceptual combination (Mumford et al., 2012). In this context, it can be concluded that creative thinking is a complex and high-level cognitive process. Teachers who can manage this process are needed in schools. Teachers who apply models such as project-based learning methods, problem-based learning methods, and active learning methods will be able to challenge students' cognitive processes in lessons, involve students in designing, problem-solving, decision-making, or conducting research activities, help them focus on complex tasks based on challenging questions or problems, and provide students with the opportunity to work for long periods of time. In this context, there is a need for teachers who can integrate these models into their lessons. However, according to the results of this study, teachers feel inadequate at "project management". Therefore, as a reflection of this result, it is expected that the skill of creative thinking and applying innovation in the social studies course is the one that teachers develop the least. Among the "Information, Media, and Technology" skills within the scope of the P21 learning framework, the primary school teachers reported that they mostly included skills to develop Information and Communication Technology literacy skills in the social studies course. This skill refers to the ability to use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate, and communicate information within the P21 framework and the ability to use digital technologies, networking tools, and social networks appropriately to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information (Battelle for Kids, 2019). In this context, it is possible to say from the teachers'

statements that they can use technology as a tool to access information, but they are not active in integrating and creating information using digital tools. For this reason, although teachers see themselves as active in "Information and Communication Technologies Literacy", it is seen that they do not meet the qualifications specified within the scope of this skill in the P21 framework. Among the last steps of the P21 framework, "life and career skills", primary school teachers reported that they mostly practiced teaching social and intercultural skills. Social skills include understanding the feelings of others, developing empathy, learning the consequences of behavior, and understanding that others may have different opinions. These skills are also directly linked to communication, cooperation, and adaptability. Intercultural skills include understanding similarities and differences in others, understanding the cultures of others, and the ability to understand and appreciate one's own culture (P21 Early Childhood Framework, 2019). In this study, it is seen that the teachers generally attributed the reason for conducting activities related to social and intercultural skills to the presence of migrant children in their classrooms who took refuge in Turkey from Syria in 2011 due to the war. In 2011, due to the migration from Syria to Turkey, it was ensured that students learned Turkish on the one hand and continued their education in their language on the other in TECs (Temporary Education Centers). Then, in the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, it was stated that the necessary equivalence studies should be carried out for the education received by the students in their home countries, and since 2018, refugee students have been gradually directed toward schools where Turkish students receive education (Meb, 2015; Özden, 2021). At this point, the initiative was left to the teachers, and as understood from this study, they tried to solve the adaptation problems with their own education and training approaches. The skills that teachers tried to develop the least were entrepreneurship and self-direction. Within the framework of the P21 framework, this skill involves developing the child's self-management, focus, perseverance, and ability to complete a task (P21 Early Childhood Framework, 2019). "Entrepreneurship" was identified as one of the skills in which teachers felt themselves most inadequate. In this context, it can be seen as an expected research finding that teachers cannot reflect the "Entrepreneurship" skill, which they see as a skill they do not have, to students through activities in their classrooms.

The third research topic of the study is the opinions of primary school teachers on the inclusion of skills in the social studies program. The teachers stated that they tried to provide all the skills in the social studies program (MEB, 2018), especially emphasized the importance of the brainstorming technique in teaching the skills of the social studies course in the 4th grade, and gave examples of making students question while gaining these skills and ensuring that they reach the achievement with guiding questions. Teachers stated that while teaching these skills, they enabled students to benefit from technology (by watching YouTube and EBA videos), had them do project work, had them do drama, taught lessons with songs, had them interview, had them do research, taught the lesson using concrete materials, and taught the lesson with the direct expression method. Çelik (2021) conducted a study with teachers to determine the activities carried out to acquire the skills in the social studies curriculum and the problems they experienced in the implementation of the curriculum. As a result of the study, teachers stated that the skills in the social studies curriculum (digital literacy, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, legal literacy, political literacy, and location analysis) were not adequately provided. It was found that there were not enough explanations and examples of activities, it was abstract for children, the time allocated to the lesson for the implementation of the program was not enough, there were problems in providing materials, and teachers were not sufficient in providing these skills. This situation supports the results of this study. Primary school teachers were asked the question, "Which of the skills in the Social Studies program do you think are dysfunctional? Explain with reasons by giving examples," and it was concluded that among the answers given, political literacy, financial literacy, and legal literacy skills were seen as dysfunctional the most. In this context, it is seen that the primary school teachers stated as a justification that the skills they expressed remain high-level skills when the grade and age levels of primary school children are considered. When the literature is examined, political literacy is seen as an important part of social studies and is expressed as knowing social decisions, expressing one's own opinions without being prejudiced against political views and differences of opinion, and having the ability to make political decisions (Political Literacy Within ITT Citizenship Education, 2002, as cited in Dağ & Koçer, 2019). Although the level of political knowledge is generally low among children, it is seen that boys are more successful in political awareness than girls (van Deth, Abendschön, & Vollmar, 2011, as cited in Dağ & Koçer, 2019). Political education is very important for a society to be composed of politically aware and sensitive citizens. Democracy education is one of the most important aspects of political education. For this reason, early ages are seen as the most appropriate age for equipping children with democratic content (Wallace, 2006: 14). However, how to do this is an important issue. Teachers stated that they generally had difficulties in this process and that they involved students in decision-making processes by having them elect a class president. Sample activities in the social studies program to help children acquire political literacy skills can guide teachers. In this context, the support of families is also undeniable. It can be ensured that political conversations are held within the family and that news programs on this subject are watched and discussed together. Financial literacy is associated with the acquisition of concepts such as income, expenditure, budget, production, distribution, consumption, and occupation in the 4th-grade social studies curriculum (MEB, 2018). Financial literacy can be seen as a basic life skill. It is a skill that



concerns people of all ages, from children deciding how to spend their pocket money to young people entering the business world, from newlyweds buying their first homes to the elderly managing their retirement savings. Financial literacy supports individuals in making these decisions and managing themselves economically (OECD, 2017). Studies show that this skill can vary according to age and gender (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2007; Kadoya et al., 2018). According to these studies, men are more financially knowledgeable than women, and middle-aged people are more financially literate than younger and older people. Kadoya and Rahimhan (2020) stated in their study that men are more financially knowledgeable than women, but women show more positive results than men in terms of financial behavior and financial attitude. They also stated that middle-aged people in Japan are more financially knowledgeable, but younger and older people show more positive results in terms of financial behavior and attitude. Giving financial literacy skills to children at an early age will positively affect their future money management skills and their ability to manage their financial decisions effectively. In this context, children can acquire basic money management skills such as saving, budgeting, investing, spending, or debt management through concretization. For example, scenario software about an imaginary account opening or future retirement planning can be considered a start. In addition, teachers can be trained in financial literacy, or financial literacy education can be taught as an independent course in primary schools. In this study, legal literacy was also seen as a dysfunctional skill by teachers. However, when the literature is examined, the importance of legal literacy is emphasized in many ways. First of all, legal literacy enables citizens to defend their rights and follow legal processes. When children are informed about legal issues from an early age, they can take bold steps to protect their rights. It also contributes to ensuring justice and equality in society (Yadav & Yadav, 2021). Legal literacy includes not only knowledge of legal issues but also competencies such as understanding legal documents, interpreting legal terms, utilizing legal resources, following the legal system, and understanding legal processes (Romig & Burge, 2019). These topics appear to children as abstract concepts and can be considered difficult subjects since law uses a complex and technical language and requires prior knowledge to understand the legal system. It may seem like a subject that children do not directly encounter in their daily lives. It is therefore important to give children concrete examples that explain what the law is and why it is important. For example, the purpose of traffic rules is to prevent accidents and keep people safe. Concrete examples like these can help children better understand the concrete implications of the law. It is important to create in-class and out-of-class teaching and learning environments to contribute to concretization. Books, whiteboards, computers, and projection devices in the classroom; outside the classroom, activities such as participating in court environments in the courthouse and organizing trips to local government centers can be suggested (Oğuz, 2015). In the classroom, students can be informed about important concepts related to the legal system. For example, the meanings of terms such as "court", "prosecutor", and "judge" can be explained. After the explanation, students can be assigned different roles. For example, one student can act as a judge, another as a lawyer, and others as witnesses, and they can share this with the class in line with the prepared scenario. Discussion groups can be formed with students, and students can be supported to defend their opinions on a subject. Such examples of concretization will improve students' thinking skills and help them better understand legal issues. In this study, the question "Which of the 21st-century skills in the Social Studies program is more important for children's adaptation to the age?" was asked to the primary school teachers by MEB (2018), and among the answers given, digital literacy, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills were considered most important by the teachers in terms of children's adaptation to the age. The digital literacy skill is defined by UNESCO (2018) as the ability to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate, and create information securely and includes the competencies in "Information, Media and Technology" literacy in the P21 framework. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are also among the "Learning and Innovation" skills among the 4C skills in the P21 framework. In this context, the results of the teachers also show consistency within themselves, and the teachers expressed the skills that they considered important for children within the P21 framework within the framework of the MEB (2018) social studies program. The majority of the primary school teachers stated that they did not find the achievements in the social studies program appropriate in terms of reflecting 21st-century skills and explained the reasons for this as the intensity of the curriculum, insufficient physical facilities, a lack of high-level skills in the achievements, and a lack of time. In this context, similar results in the literature are reached. In Demir and Özyurt's (2021) study titled "Examining the Social Studies Curriculum and Textbooks in the Context of 21st Century Skills", it was stated that the social studies curriculum is aimed at developing some of the 21st-century skills, but it does not cover all of the 21st-century skills.

## Recommendations

In addition, there is not a balanced distribution in the curricula for the development of skills, and while many outcomes for the development of some skills are included in the program, some skills are not included in the curricula. In this context, the following suggestions are valid for the results of the study: It is stated what the basic skills are in the social studies program. The framework for competences and learning domains specifies

skills; however, it is not made clear which ability corresponds to which outcome. The program needs to reflect this circumstance more accurately. Additionally, teachers cannot successfully teach skills because there are no activity examples in the program. Within the context of success, illustrative exercises for each skill should be incorporated into the program. Within the parameters of the curriculum, more research should be done on both what to teach and how to educate. For the teaching of all these skills, it is crucial that current and future educators have better training and information on skill development, as well as access to materials or examples that are concrete for the acquisition of abstract or advanced abilities.

When high-level skills are examined separately, it is possible to include suggestions for teaching each skill. For example, for entrepreneurship skills, it can be suggested that teachers create an environment for students to take risks and realize their differences and innovations. Stone painting, ceramic painting, wood painting, egg painting, glass painting, etc. are obtained from art activities. Offering the products obtained with the materials for sale by the students and providing the opportunity to buy the materials that their classes need with the income obtained from the sale can be considered a start for entrepreneurial skills. In line with the achievements related to the professions in the life studies and social studies programs, it can be ensured that the occupational groups related to entrepreneurship and the people working in these professions meet with the students. It can be suggested that exemplary entrepreneurs share their experiences with students and become mentors to them. In the acquisition of legal literacy skills (rights, law, justice, etc.). Concretization of concepts is important. Drama can be used to realize this concretization, especially in younger age groups. By sharing roles such as prosecutor, judge, and lawyer, it is possible to focus on the solution of possible cases. Discussion groups can be formed with students, and students can be supported to defend their ideas on a subject. Examples of such embodiments will develop students' thinking skills and help them better understand legal issues. Financial literacy skills are among the skills that are difficult for teachers to acquire. In this context, basic money management skills such as saving, budgeting, investing, spending, and debt management can be gained through embodiment. For example, they may be asked to write a script for a fictitious account opening or future retirement planning. In addition, it can be recommended to give trainers training on financial literacy for teachers. Families can be supported to develop political literacy skills. They can have daily news watching or newspaper reading activities at home. Topics that create the agenda in classes can be included in the social studies course.

It is suggested that in order to acquire 21st-century skills, traditional teaching methods be abandoned and that teachers be given incentives and resources to devote enough time to eTwinning, Scientix, and FCL activities where project-based models can be realized within the framework of the European School Network. It is advised in this situation to use evaluation tools that will aid students' project work rather than the conventional exam approach for skill assessment.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. The corresponding author carried out the entire research process. The author has no conflict of interest to disclose.

## Ethical Approval

Ethical permission (12.05.2023, number:E-19928322-900-257575-2023/03) was obtained from Balıkesir University Ethics Committee for this research.

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