

## **THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHER TRAINEES TOWARDS LIFE KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHING COURSE<sup>1)</sup>**

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**Abstract.** In Turkey, Social Studies programme basically aims to raise active and productive citizens. This means that teachers are going to inject philosophy of life to the students by means of social studies course. In order to carry out this responsibility, teachers and teachers-to-be should be accustomed to comprehension and learning processes of children and adolescents. By continuous self-improvement, the teachers should try to get more information on methods, materials and tools that can be used in the classroom. A course “Social Studies” gives importance to social behaviour in primary and high schools. This course is given to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> grades as “General Life Knowledge” and 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades as “Social Studies”. This study aims to investigate the expectations and attitudes of social studies teachers-to-be towards General Life Knowledge and Social Studies Courses in Primary School Teaching Department. 185 students who had taken General Life Knowledge and Social Studies I and II are included in the study. A questionnaire consisting of 40 questions was used as an instrument. In order for this instrument to reflect the real

thoughts and feelings of the students, the students are told not to indicate their names in the questionnaire. The students who had taken the questionnaire do not have any anxiety over failing or passing this course because they had already taken and done with these courses for two semesters. The gathered data were analysed in three dimensions: (i) the content and method of General Life Knowledge and Social Studies Course; (ii) the contribution of this course to individuals' being good citizens and socialisation; (iii) Social Studies perception level of Teachers-to-be. It is concluded that teachers-to-be think that the present course is necessary and important, the methods used in teaching social studies are sufficient, materials are not of sufficient amount; it is also indicated they are able to relate their social studies perception levels to their daily lives and, most important of all, they are make deductions about being a good citizen. The other results are presented in detail in the study.

*Keywords:* teacher attitudes, Social Studies Teaching, Live Knowledge Teaching

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## **1. Introduction**

Primary Education is the most important and necessary one of the education stages. The fact that primary education institutions form the foundation of the education system and that the other institutions are based on this foundation; that is, these institutions are in the position to effect positively or negatively not only the education system but also the other systems of the society, clearly indicates the importance of primary education institutions (Yeşil, 1996, p.1). Primary education is not a crawling period and a first-step which is compulsory, but temporary and would be forgotten when upper stage institutions are added on but is the most sensitive and crucial point of the entire education system (Titrek, 1999, p.17).

The aim of primary education is to prepare the individual for the life. And this preparation can only be realised by giving the necessary information

about the natural and social environment he is living in and equipping him with the transfer ability which will help him to use this knowledge in his life (Erdem, 1996, p.336).

When the education in the future is observed from Europe's point of view, our country was given some standards concerning political, economic and social which were to be met in the accession to the European Council process. The safeguarding and improvement of the institutions providing democracy, the superiority of the justice, achievement of the standards regarding human rights and trade/market economy are the main one of these standards. All of these standards are directly related with the education system. Educational institutions are to create and for these standards initially in their own institutional culture. Only then it would be possible that these standards may become values of life in the individuals they educated (Çağlar, 2001, p.88).

One of the most important functions of the educational institutions is to raise the child as a good citizen. Educational institutions perform this function by providing the socialisation of the child; his learning the culture, history, institutions of the society he is living in; equipping him with the behaviours required by the roles he plays in the society, the opportunities the society has for him and the ways to use them. By performing these functions, educational institutions realise both the happiness and productivity of the individual and the continuity of the society. In our country, the students were given a considerable amount of this knowledge and abilities in the first stage of primary education institutions by Life Knowledge course in the first 3 years and by Social Studies course in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades (Erden, 1998, p. 4-5).

There are the five perspectives on the central purpose of social studies education: 1) *Social studies as citizenship transmission*: Students become committed to a democratic way of life and accept personal, civic, and economic responsibilities as adult members of society; 2) *Social studies as personel development*: The central purpose of social studies education is to help each student develop to the fullest extent of her or his social, emotional,

physical, and cognitive potential. 3) *Social studies as reflective inquiry*: The central purpose of social studies education is to encourage and train students to develop and reflective thinking skills. 4) *Social studies as social science education*: The central purpose of social studies education is to make young people knowledgeable about social science. Social science is the objective study of humans in relation to other humans and to the physical environment and can be divided into eight separate disciplines: anthropology, economics, geography, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology. 5) *Social studies as rational decision making and social action*: The central purpose of social studies education is to teach students how to make rational (reflective, informed) decisions and to act on their decisions (Woolever & Scott, 1988, p.10-13)

“Social Studies” has entered to the educational institutions as a subject at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first Social Studies curriculum was consisted of History, Geography and Citizenship Knowledge. However, from 1960s on, History and Geography have been less influential in Social Studies and Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Political Science and Sociological Psychology have gained importance instead. In our country, History, Geography and Citizenship Knowledge courses were united under the name Social Studies with 1968 programme (Erden, 1998, p. 9).

In our country, Social Studies course was put into the curriculum of the Primary-Teacher Schools first instead of History, Geography and Citizenship Knowledge courses in 1952 and in the 5<sup>th</sup> National Education Council gathered in 1952, it was decided that Social Studies should be taught in primary and secondary schools. The same course was called “Study of the Countries and Societies” course in Primary School Curriculum Draft dated 1962. The new Primary School program dated 1968, on the other hand, assumed the same course as Social Studies (Sığan, 1997, p. 2-3).

The present Social Studies Course Education Programme of Primary Schools in our country has been put into practice in 1998/1999 academic year.

In Official Communication Journal numbered 2487, it is indicated that social studies course education programme for primary schools suggests a three-hour course per week (a total of 108 hours in 36 weeks) for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades (Kocaoluk & Kocaoluk, 2001, p.296). In the first level of primary education, social studies courses of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year students have been prepared with a multi-disciplinary approach. In the second level of primary education, with the abolition of national history and national geography courses which were prepared for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades with a single-disciplinary approach before 1998-1999 academic year, a social studies course education programme for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades which was prepared with a multi-disciplinary approach was established as well (Alkış, 2002, p.58).

The definition of Social Studies in Turkey can be made as such: Life Knowledge/Social Studies Teaching programme is an education programme which creates appropriate aims for the roles of the responsible citizens of Turkish democratic society, constitutes its content by combining historical, geographical and citizenship knowledge subjects and offers life-long citizenship skills (Barth & Demirtaş, 1997).

Social Studies course should give the students the opportunity to realise themselves, to apply the principles of democracy and to acquire democratic attitudes by creating contexts which will improve decision-making skill. In this sense, Social Studies course, which is considered as the application field of democracy education, can be effective and meaningful only if it is given in democratic contexts. The principles of democracy can be assumed and improved when the appropriate conditions are supplied (Sağlam, 2000, p. 68).

The aims of teaching Life Knowledge course are determined as the child's learning his natural and social environment as a whole by using his own qualifications and improving himself in this context (Tuncer, 1999, p.40). According to Barth, as well as the two skills present in the individuals who will form a democratic society, the realisation of the following four target skills which will form the necessary structure for using these two previous

skills is among the aims of the Social Studies (Öztürk & Baysal, 1999, p. 5). These are being able to a) acquire knowledge; b) use the knowledge analytically; c) investigate beliefs and values; d) being an individual equipped with knowledge and skills, play an active role in the society.

As it is seen, from taxonomic point of view, social studies course has cognitive, sensory and psycho-motor aims. This is true for other courses as well. However, one of the most striking features of Social Studies course is that the sensory aims weigh more in the curriculum when compared with other courses (Öztürk & Baysal, 1999, p. 5-6).

“Life Knowledge and Teaching of Social Studies” course is given to the students of the Primary School Department in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of education both in spring and fall terms as 3-credit courses (a total of 6 credits) throughout their 4-year-education.

The course content consists of topics such as the aims of National Education for raising good citizens, citizenship education in the first stage of primary education, the examination of Life Knowledge and Social Studies curriculum, the psychological factors affecting the teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies courses, materials and tools to be used in Life Knowledge courses in 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grades and in Social Studies course in 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grades, teaching principles, strategies and techniques.

In the second term: learning strategies and activities in the Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course, the development of teaching materials and tools, writing suitable aims and behaviours for gradual classification, question asking skills, applying problem-solving method, making annual and daily plans, assessment of learning, teaching, thinking and performance.

As known, some of the most important problems the teachers encounter while teaching Social Studies course are not being able to use various methods and techniques, not being able to follow the recent developments in the field, subjects’ being abstract, learning by memorisation, difficulty in guiding the

students for research-investigation, the insufficiency of the course materials-tools in schools and crowded classes (Yanpar, 1994, p.142).

Teaching-training which continues its existence in the triangle of school-teacher-student for many many years is to use multi-dimensional, multi-channeled new alternatives with the addition of new technologies into our lives (Oktay, 2001, p. 25).

The use of technology in education has been discussed widely for the last few years. From here on, the developments in technology and the aims of education move in parallel to each other and this creates many opportunities for the education to develop thinking and learning styles (Bayhan, 1999, p.59). According to a recent study, it is determined that there are about  $1.5 \cdot 10^6$  websites concerning “Teaching of Social Sciences- Social Sciences Education” on the internet. Teachers and students may experience many virtual excursions via internet (Rissinger, 1999).

The subject explained or defined in the theoretical part of teaching lesson should both be brought into the classroom and be seen and examined in its original place. The material that should be present in order to realise a good Social Studies education consist of ; photographs, slides-films, maps, posters, tables and diagrams, CD ROM, recent articles with photographs taken from newspapers or magazines, video and TV, OHP, slide machine (Efe, 1996-1997, p.140). Using materials and tools in Social Studies education will both make learning fun and keep the students’ attention alive. All these display the importance of using materials-tools and technology in education.

## **2. Method**

In this section, there is information on sample group, data collection tools and evaluation. Sample group consists of all the 4<sup>th</sup> year students of Primary School Department of Education Faculty, Uludağ University. The assessment tool was used on students who had taken the Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course for two terms and who had not bear

anxiety over failing or passing this course. These students would not receive an additional Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course in the rest of their education but would apply what they had learnt in this course to their teaching practise. The assessment tool was applied a total of 197 students; however, due to various reasons only 185 of these were considered as valid and used in the present study. An information form consisting of 40 questions was created as the assessment tool. The questionnaire prepared by Tuncer for his article named “The Content and Learning Problems Encountered in the Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies” was also used while forming the questions of the questionnaire. Some of the questions were open-ended and some were closed-ended. The questions forming this assessment tool are gathered under three main headings: 1) the content and method of Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course; 2) the contribution of this course into socialisation and bringing up of the individual as a good citizen; 3) the perception levels of the teacher trainees of the Social Sciences and Social Studies. In order for the students to reflect their real feelings and thoughts, and therefore to increase the reliability, they are asked not to write their names on their answer sheets. SPSS programme was used in the analysis of the data gathered by the assessment tool.

### **3. Findings and Discussion**

In order to be able to determine some features of the sample group, 3 non-numbered questions were asked. Bu using the answers to these questions, the very general information about the sample group was distinguished and indicated below.

A total of 185 students, the sample group consists of 75.6% (f=140) female and 24.3% (f=45) male students. Thus, it can be said that the primary school teacher trainees are mostly girls.

When the students were examined according to the schools they graduated from (before this faculty), it is seen that most of them are graduates of Classical High Schools (Table 1).

**Table 1.** The findings related with the schools the students graduated from

	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Classical High School	113	61,1
Super High School	43	23,2
Anatolian High School	11	5,9
Religious High School	5	2,7
Vocational High School	4	2,2
Private High Schools	4	2,2
Teaching Profession Anatolian High Schools	3	1,6
Technical-Vocational Anatolian High School	2	1,1
Total	185	100

Table 2 displays on which number Primary School Education Department of Education Faculty, Uludağ University was in their list of choices for university/profession. The rate of the students who has chosen this department as their first choice is 8.6%. 30.3% of the students had chosen this department as their 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> choice.

**Table 2.** The findings on the students' choosing Education Faculty

Choice Order	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
1	16	8,6
2	13	7,0
3	17	9,2
4	12	6,5
5	22	11,9
6-10	56	30,3
10-15	49	26,5
Total	185	100

As indicated before, the attitudes of the teacher trainees towards the Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course are examined under 3 main headings and these are explained in detail below.

### 3.1. The Content and Method of Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies Course

A total of 20 questions were asked to the students concerning the content and method of Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course. 8 of these questions were related with content and 12 were about the method of this course.

#### 3.1.1. The Findings on the Content of the Course

7 of the 8 questions were related with the content of the course and the answers to these questions are displayed in Table 3 with their frequencies (f) and percentages (%).

**Table 3.** The findings on the content and method of Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course

	YES		SOMETIMES		NO	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Do you think that recent and up-to-date issues are addressed enough in Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies Course?	75	40,5	92	49,7	18	9,7
Are you able to use the knowledge you have acquired in this course in real life?	61	33,0	96	51,9	28	15,1
Are you interested in the content of Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course?	87	47,0	67	36,2	31	16,8
Do you consider this content sufficient for your professional life?	59	31,9	53	28,6	73	39,5
Do you think that you are fully competent on the subjects of the Primary School Social	34	18,4	71	38,4	80	43,2

Studies subjects?						
Do you think that The content of Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course is scientific?	64	35,1	90	48,6	30	16,2
Do you think that the content of Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course is sufficient in teaching the geographical values of our country?	41	22,2	69	37,3	75	40,5

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that the current and up-to-date issues were included in the course (40.5 %), the students were able to use what they have learnt in this course in real life (33.0 %), they think that the content of this course was scientific (35.1 %), they were interested in the content of the course (47.0 %). However, when the rate of the “sometimes” response was considered, it is seen that the students had ticked this choice quite frequently.

Again, in Table 3, it is shown that the students thought that the content of the course was not sufficient for their professional life (39.5 %), they did not feel fully competent on the Social studies subjects of the Primary Education (43.2 %) and that the content of the course for teaching the geographical values of our country was not sufficient (40.5 %).

Moreover, the students listed the subject fields of Social Studies in which they felt at ease in expressing themselves as geography (38.4 %, f=71), Citizenship Knowledge (34.1 %, f=63) and History (27.6 %, f=51).

### *3.1.2. The Findings on the Method of the Course*

As indicated before, a total of 12 questions were asked to the students. The responses to these questions are explained in detail below.

**Table 4.** The findings on the method of the course

	YES		SOMETIMES		NO	
	F	%	f	%	f	%
Do you think that you have sufficiently acquired the methods taught in this course?	69	37,3	79	42,7	37	20,0
Did the materials used during the activities in the course made it easier to comprehend the subject?	103	55,7	67	36,2	15	8,1
Was your attitude towards this course affected by the methods used by the teacher?	116	62,7	59	31,9	10	5,4

Upon the examination of Table 4, it is seen that, despite the quite high frequency of the answer “sometimes”, the students generally acquired the teaching methods taught in the course sufficiently (37.3 %), they thought that the materials used during the activities in the course made it easier to comprehend the subject (55.7 %) and they indicated that their attitudes towards this course were influenced by the methods used by the teacher (62.7 %). 74.6 % (f= 134) of the students responding “yes” and “sometimes” to the question whether their attitudes towards this course were affected by the method teacher used labelled this influence as positive and 24.4 % of them (f= 41) tagged this influence as negative.

The answers to the question “did your grade(s) affect your attitude towards this course?” were 51.3 % (f= 96) yes and 48.7 % (f= 90) no. 66.3 % (f= 63) of the students saying “yes” to this question indicated that their grades affected their attitudes towards this course positively and 33.7 % (f= 32) of them negatively.

The answers to the question “Which one is dominant, you think, in the things you have learned in The Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies Course?” were 62.7 % (f= 116) memorisation and 37.3% (f= 69) acquisition.

About the projects and tasks given in this course, 55.1 5 (f= 102) of the students indicated that these were positive and useful, 23.2 5 (f= 43) indicated

that they found these useful but they had difficulty in comprehending what was being done and 21.6 % (f=40) of the students indicated that these tasks and projects were unnecessary and unimportant.

The responses to the question inquiring about the methods used most in this course are displayed in Table 5.

**Table 5.** The methods used by the teacher most in the course

	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Lecturing	182	98,4
Question-Answer	181	97,8
Discussion	154	83,2
Co-operative Learning	129	69,7
Dramatisation	124	67,0
Group Work	124	67,0
Problem Solving	111	60,0
Presentation	96	51,9
Observation	87	47,0
Investigation excursion	79	42,7
Using source person	76	41,1

According to Table 5, the students indicated that the teacher had used lecturing, question- answer and discussion techniques most within the course. Moreover, the fact that co-operative learning, dramatisation and group-work techniques were used in the course is important for teacher trainees because various methods have been included in the course.

The answers to the question asking them about which methods they will use most while they teach when they become teachers are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** The methods indicated as to be used most by the teacher trainees

	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Question-Answer	176	95,1
Observation	160	86,5
Using source person	157	84,9
Investigation excursion	156	84,3
Lecturing	153	83,7
Dramatisation	129	69,7
Co-operative Learning	128	69,2
Problem Solving	122	65,9
Discussion	120	64,9
Presentation	113	61,1
Group Work	101	54,6

The teacher trainees listed question-answer, observation, using source person, investigation excursion and lecturing as the techniques that they would use while teaching Life Knowledge and Social Studies courses.

Additionally, the students were asked an open-ended question about the most liked and disliked aspects of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course. Upon the examination of the given responses, it is seen that the most liked aspects of the Social Studies course are its preparing them to real life, the use of various teaching methods and activities, and the most disliked aspects are its requiring memorisation and containing unnecessary details.

### *3.2. The Contribution of the Course into Socialisation and Bringing-up of the Individual as a Good Citizen*

In this section, the students were asked 9 questions and their responses are given below with their frequencies and percentages in Table 7.

**Table 7.** The findings on the contribution of this course into socialisation and bringing up of the individual as a good citizen

	YES		SOMETIMES		NO	
	F	%	f	%	f	%
Do you believe the influence of Social Sciences in culturalisation process?	153	82,7	29	15,5	3	1,6
Do you believe the efficiency of Social Studies in the individual's being a member of the state who fulfils every right and responsibility?	138	74,6	40	21,6	7	3,8
Does this course have an influence on your forming a democratic attitude?	111	60,0	54	29,2	20	10,8
Do you think that Turkish people have the modern norms and values sufficiently?	12	6,5	73	39,5	100	54,1
Do you believe that Social studies have a great contribution in acquiring these norms and values?	109	58,9	64	34,6	12	6,5
Do you consider yourself as a good "world citizen"?	75	40,5	91	49,2	19	10,3
Does this course have any effect on your realisation of your citizenship duties and responsibilities?	109	58,9	57	30,8	19	10,3
Does this course have any effect on your comprehension of the importance of environment protection for the present and the future?	112	60,5	47	25,4	26	14,1
Does this course made you form a bottom-up approach towards social issues?	98	53,0	65	35,1	22	11,9

Upon the examination of Table 7, it is seen that the students believed the effect of Social Studies in the Culturalisation process (82.7 %), that Social Studies had an effect on the individual's being a member of the state who fulfils every right and responsibility (74.6 %), that this course had an influence on their forming a democratic attitude (60.6 %), that Social studies had a great contribution in acquiring modern norms and values (58.9 %), this course had affected the realisation of their own citizenship duties and responsibilities (58.9 %), this course had affected their comprehension of the importance of

environment protection for the present and the future (60.5 %), and that this course made them form a bottom-up approach towards social issues (53.9 %).

However, as seen in Table 7, the fact that the students answered the question “Do you consider yourself as a good “world citizen”?” as sometimes with a ratio of 49.2 % and the question about whether Turkish people have the modern norms and values sufficiently or not as no with a ratio of 54.1 % make these an area of concern.

### *3.3. The Perception Levels of the Teacher Trainees of the Social Sciences and Social Studies*

A total of 11 questions concerning the perception levels of the teacher trainees of the Social Sciences and Social Studies and the responses to these questions are displayed in Table 8.

**Table 8.** The findings on the perception levels of the teacher trainees of the Social Sciences and Social Studies

	YES		SOMETIMES		NO	
	f	%	f	%	F	%
Do you feel yourself competent/qualified enough to make decisions which may effect your family, society, country and the world?	71	38,4	84	45,4	30	16,2
Do you use basic scientific terms and concepts in your life and are you able to make connections between these terms and the events experienced?	82	44,3	92	49,7	11	5,9
Are you able to evaluate the developments in Social Studies by using various mass media tools?	107	57,8	67	36,2	11	5,9
Are you able to make decisions concerning personal and public health, nutrition and life styles by using scientific knowledge?	85	45,9	90	48,6	10	5,4
Are you able to combine and connect Social Studies with other sciences?	94	50,8	75	40,5	16	8,6
Does the teaching of Social Studies increase your self-confidence in solving	72	38,9	84	45,4	29	15,7

the problems you have with your surrounding environment or context?						
Do you have difficulty in using scientific processes (observation, classification,...etc)?	14	7,6	105	56,8	66	35,7
Do you think that this course has provided you with a researcher point of view?	70	37,8	79	42,7	36	19,5
Are you interested in and enthusiastic about a recent development in Social Sciences?	84	45,4	77	41,6	24	13,0
Do you think there is a difference between Social Sciences and Social Studies?	125	67,6	36	19,5	24	13,0

The students responded to the questions in this section mostly as “yes” and “sometimes”. They indicated that they were you able to evaluate the developments in Social Studies by using various mass media tools (57.8 %), they were able to combine Social Studies with other sciences (50.8 %), they were interested in and enthusiastic about a recent development in Social Sciences (45.4 %) and they noticed a difference between Social Sciences and Social Studies (67.6 %). Moreover, they explained that they were able to combine and connect Social Studies mostly with history, geography, citizenship knowledge, human relations, environment and archaeology.

The items receiving “sometimes” response most are “Do you feel yourself competent/qualified enough to make decisions which may affect your family, society, country and the world?” 45.4 %; “Do you use basic scientific terms and concepts in your life and are you able to make connections between these terms and the events experienced?” 49.7 %; “Are you able to make decisions concerning personal and public health, nutrition and life styles by using scientific knowledge?” 48.6 %; “Does the teaching of Social Studies increase your self-confidence in solving the problems you have with your surrounding environment or context?” 45.4 %; “Do you have difficulty in using scientific processes (observation, classification,...etc)?” 56.8%; and “Do you think that

this course has provided you with a researcher point of view?"42.7%. It is seen that the second choice in the items above receiving sometimes most was "yes".

#### **4. Results and Suggestions**

In this study, the views and attitudes of teacher trainees towards the Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies Course within Primary School Teacher Education Programme were investigated. Thus, an assessment tool consisting of 40 questions was applied to the teacher trainees and the findings were evaluated in three dimensions. These are the content and method of Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course, the contribution of this course into socialisation and bringing up of the individual as a good citizen and the perception levels of the teacher trainees of the Social Sciences and Social Studies

About the course content, the students indicated that the recent and up-to-date issues are addressed enough in this course, that they were able to use the knowledge they have acquired in this course in real life and that they were interested in the content of this course.

Regarding the method, generally, it is seen that the students had sufficiently acquired the methods taught in this course, that the materials used during the activities in the course made it easier to comprehend the subject and that their attitude towards this course affected by the methods used by the teacher mostly positively.

It is seen that the teacher had used lecturing, question-answer and discussion techniques mostly in the lessons, however the teacher had also included co-operative learning dramatisations and group work in the course therefore provided variety. Moreover, the teacher trainees indicated that they would mostly use question-answer, observation, using source person, investigation excursion and lecturing techniques while teaching Life Knowledge and Social Studies courses to their own students.

When this course is examined regarding its contribution to the socialisation and bringing up of the individual as a good citizen, it is seen that this course is effective in the culturalisation process and the individual's being a member of the state who fulfils every right and responsibility, forming a democratic attitude, the students' realising their own citizenship duties and responsibilities, in the comprehension of the importance of environment protection for the present and future and in the development of a bottom-up approach towards social issues.

It is seen that the teacher trainees have quite improved perception levels of Social Studies and Social Sciences. The students indicated that they were able to evaluate the developments in Social Studies by using various mass media tools, to combine and connect Social Studies with other sciences that they were interested in and enthusiastic about a recent development in Social Sciences and that they had noticed the difference between Social studies and Social Sciences.

In addition to these, the students indicated the most liked aspects of the Social Studies course as preparing them to real life, the use of various teaching methods and activities and the most disliked aspects as its requiring memorisation and containing unnecessary details.

Despite the fact that the findings of the study are mostly positive, there are some negative points as well. The students considered the content of the Teaching of Life Knowledge and Social Studies course insufficient for their professional life, and indicated that they did not feel fully competent on the subjects of the Primary School Social Studies subjects and that the content of the course is insufficient in teaching the geographical values of our country. More than the half of the students thought that memorisation is dominant in the Teaching of Social Studies course.

As known, since sensory aims have a significant role in the teaching of social studies, it is important that both teacher and the teacher trainees should develop a positive attitude towards this course. In order to develop the atti-

tudes of teacher trainees even more positively, this course should be made concrete and a useful learning atmosphere should be created by providing a positive interaction in the classroom, learner-centred teaching should be considered (Öztürk & Baysal, 1999, p.20).

Social Studies education should not be considered merely as the exchange of information; the memorisation should be eliminated by forming a broader perspective in the students regarding the course subjects by using various teaching methods and techniques.

The attitudes and behaviours which may hinder the development of democracy in Social Studies courses which are very important in forming democratic attitudes in students should be left out of the classroom context and the students should be made good “world citizens.”

#### NOTES

1. This paper was presented at the International Conference on Higher Education Innovation – Abstracts Book, Kiev, Ukraine, p. 6.

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