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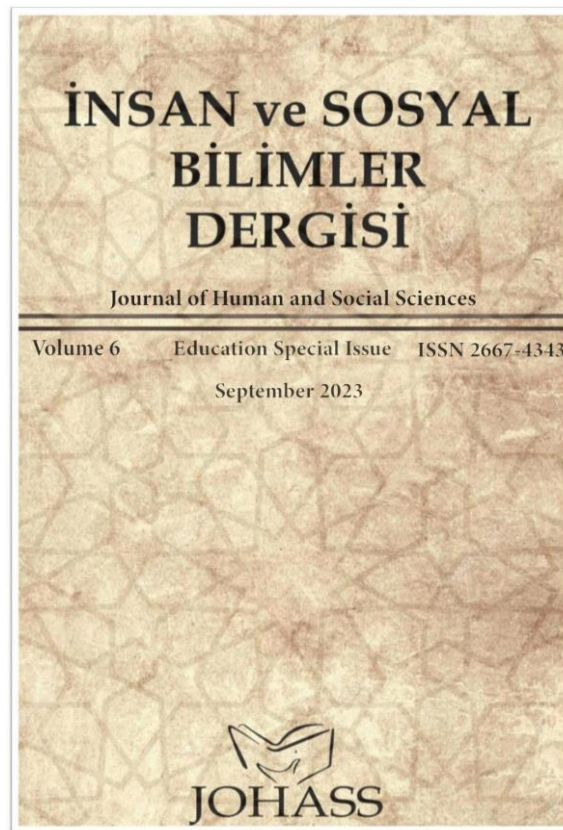
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### Depicting the Learning and Teaching Process in Social Studies Classrooms: Middle School Students' Drawings \*

\* This article is derived from Fatma Özge Bayram's master's thesis entitled "Social studies lesson and learning-teaching process in middle school students' drawings", conducted under the supervision of Döndü Özdemir.

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## **Depicting the Learning and Teaching Process in Social Studies Classrooms: Middle School Students' Drawings \***

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### **Abstract**

The study aims to determine and examine how secondary school students reflect the social studies lesson learning-teaching process on their drawings. One of the qualitative research methods, the phenomenology, was used. The data were obtained from the drawings of the students and the explanations for these drawings. Maximum variation sampling was used to determine the participants, and 118 students studying in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades of three secondary schools in the central district of Isparta province participated in the research. The content analysis technique was used to analyse the research data. It has been determined that the students' drawings mostly reflect classroom learning environments, traditional ordering, teacher-centred and expression-oriented methods, and listening-oriented student behaviours. In addition, it was determined that the expectation of a lesson held in the open air, where the students were more fun, games and activities were used, came to the fore.

**Keywords:** Social studies, the learning-teaching process of social studies, students' drawings.

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## **Introduction**

From the past to the present, the primary purpose of education systems is to raise citizens in accordance with the expectations of society. In this process, especially, the courses within the scope of social studies have assumed a pioneering role in order for individuals to gain knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to participate effectively in society (Banks & Banks, 1999), that is, to become citizens who are suitable for the structure of developing and changing societies, who can take an active role in life and integrate with the world (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 1994). Therefore, it can be said that there is a universal consensus that the main responsibility of the course is to raise effective citizens (Barr et al., 2013; Bining & Bining, 1952; Chapin, 2006; Doğanay, 2002; NCSS, 1994; Öztürk, 2012; Parker, 2001; Sönmez, 1998; Zarillo, 2000). Thus, to create meaningful learning environments for children (Parker, 2001), the social studies course integrates the knowledge gained from social and human sciences, other sciences and current events with an interdisciplinary approach (Barr et al., 2013; NCSS, 1994; Öztürk, 2012). An effective teaching process is vital in realising these critical aims of the course.

For an effective teaching process in the social studies course, it is essential that students perceive and understand it in accordance with its purpose and content and that they can be active in the lesson. In order for the lesson to be effective and efficient, it is crucial that students take an active role and assume their own learning responsibilities, teachers conduct the lesson as a guide, and technological materials and students' own works are used in the lesson (Demirkaya, 2017). In addition, it is necessary to include the problems that students encounter in daily life in the lesson, to teach social issues such as ethics and social rules by establishing a connection with the past and the future, and to develop their creativity by providing interactive environments (NCSS, 1992). In Turkey, especially in the 2005 and later curricula, the necessity of conducting social studies courses with learning and teaching processes in which students are active has been clearly stated. In the current social studies curriculum (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2018), it is emphasised that the course should have an interdisciplinary approach, take into account basic principles such as locality, topicality, and reflective inquiry, be equipped with methods and techniques that provide students with social science methodology, frequently compare them with real-life problems, make use of out-of-school environments in teaching, and bring current and controversial issues into the classroom by

associating them with problem-solving, critical thinking, using evidence, decision making and research skills. Therefore, making realistic evaluations of the structure and learning-teaching processes of social studies courses in schools is prominent.

There are many studies in the literature that examine social studies courses in schools in Turkey from the perspective of teachers in terms of curriculum (Çelikkaya & Kürümlüoğlu, 2018; Kaymakcı & Ata, 2012; Memişoğlu, 2012; Topçu, 2017), objectives (Özkılıç, 1992), methods and techniques used in the course (Aydemir, 2012; Çelikkaya & Kuş, 2009), social studies education in Turkey in general (Kılınçkaya, 2018) and expectations towards this course (Kuş & Çelikkaya, 2010). On the other hand, there have been studies evaluating social studies course learning-teaching environments and processes based on student views (Ayva, 2010; Çetin & Dinç, 2017; Deveci et al., 2014; Dündar et al., 2016; Erdoğan, 2009; Ocağ & Didin, 2018; Sağlam & Güngör, 2016) and determining expectations (Aktepe et al., 2014; Deveci & Gürdoğan Bayır, 2011; Karaman & Akbaba, 2020). In addition, some studies examine the effectiveness of social studies learning-teaching processes through a meta-synthesis study (Yaşar et al., 2015) and determine student perceptions of the course through different data collection tools such as metaphors (Gömleksiz et al., 2012; Güven & Akhan, 2007), emblem and logo designs (Aydemir & Ustaoglu Çelik, 2023). Student drawings are also one of the ways that can be used to determine perceptions and opinions about the course.

Drawings are of great importance for children to reflect on themselves and express their feelings and thoughts about events. Drawings are also used to recognise children in terms of creating non-verbal language, thus facilitating expression (Yavuzer, 2019). Drawings are a useful and effective tool for gaining significant information in a short time (Miles, 2000). Learning the world of human signification through drawing offers a different perspective compared to the expression made by speaking and writing (Haney et al., 2004). Through drawings, which children see as a game at almost every age, what they cannot express, and what they feel and think can be revealed (Yavuzer, 2019). As can be seen, children's drawings are considered as an effective measurement tool that can be used to evaluate the impact of what they see and experience and to understand their thoughts. Students can convey their perceptions and opinions more sincerely, realistically and comfortably through drawings. Thus, it can be thought that more precise and concrete data can be obtained about the social studies course and the learning-teaching process through the drawings of the students.

In the relevant literature, children's drawings have been used in different studies, such as in terms of the family (Türkkan, 2004; Akgün & Ergül, 2015), the internet (Ersoy & Türkkan,

2009), love (Günindi, 2015), violence (Akbulut & Saban, 2012), war and peace (Aktaş, 2015), sustainable development and national happiness (Ahonen et al., 2018), teacher (Ahi et al., 2016; Arslan Cansever, 2017), environmental problems (Ersoy & Türkkkan, 2010; Özdemir Özden & Özden, 2015; Seçgin et al, 2010), museums (Kisovar Ivanda & Batarelo Kokić, 2013), active citizenship (Çevik Kansu & Öksüz, 2015), literacy (Tavşanlı & Kaldırım, 2018), sports and sports brands (Ünal, 2017), school garden (Cronin Jones, 2005; Salı et al., 2014), scientist (Manzoli et al., 2006; Oğuz, 2007), STEM (Benek & Akçay, 2018). In addition, there are studies examining perceptions and opinions about courses such as Turkish (Melanlıoğlu, 2015), English (Yaman, 2018; Xiao & Carless, 2013) and science (Ballıel Ünal, 2017; Şahin Akyüz, 2016) through drawings. On the other hand, some studies (Akman & Ekinci, 2021; Yalçınkaya, 2015) have also been conducted to determine students' perceptions of only social studies courses through drawings. A similar study on the learning-teaching process of the course was not found. Therefore, the study has a unique value in this respect. In addition, it can be said that students can express themselves more easily through drawing, and the deficiencies and problems related to the learning-teaching process can be identified more realistically and concretely. For these reasons, the study aimed to determine how the 5th, 6th and 7th-grade secondary school students reflected the social studies course learning-teaching processes they experienced in schools in their drawings and answers to the following sub-questions were sought:

1. What are the characteristics of social studies courses reflected in students' drawings?
2. Do the characteristics of the students' drawings differ according to the grade level?
3. What are the students' expectations for an effective social studies course?

## **Method**

### **Model**

Phenomenology design was used in the study. Phenomenology is inductive descriptive research that involves obtaining data from people who directly experience a phenomenon, systematically and in-depth investigating how individuals experience the relevant phenomenon and how they make sense of these experiences (Patton, 2014), defining the common meaning of these experiences, and aiming to highlight the perceptions of those who experience the experience from their own perspective (Creswell, 2016; Ersoy, 2016; Merriam, 2013). This study aimed to present a detailed picture of the structure and characteristics of social studies

courses from the perspective of students who directly experienced social studies courses in schools.

### **Participants**

The research was conducted with 5th, 6th, and 7th-grade students who attended social studies courses delivered by branch teachers in secondary schools. In this sense, the participants of the study consisted of 118 students studying in three secondary schools in the central district of Isparta province. Maximum variation sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the participants. The main purpose of maximum variation sampling is to reflect the diversity of individuals in this sample to the maximum extent by creating a small sample group (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Considering that it may change the experiences and perceptions of the students, the socio-economic environment where the schools are located was accepted as a diverse area, and three schools were randomly selected at high, medium and low socio-economic levels. One branch was selected from each school, and data were collected from 156 students on a voluntary basis. However, the data obtained from 38 students were excluded from the analysis. As a result, the drawings of 118 students were analysed.

Of the students participating in the study, 65 (55.1%) were girls and 53 (44.9%) were boys. Of the participants, 39 (33.3%) were fifth-grade students, 38 (32.2%) were sixth-grade students, and 41 (34.7%) were seventh-grade students. The report card grades of 2 (1.7%) of the students were between 55-69, 18 (15.3%) between 70-84, and 76 (64.4%) between 85-100. 22 people (18.6%) did not specify their report card grades. Most (49.2%) of the participants' mothers were housewives, while 39 (33.1%) worked as civil servants. The mother of 5 students (4.2%) was self-employed. 3 students (2.5%) did not specify their mother's occupation. The fathers of 37 (31.4%) of the participants were self-employed, 26 (22.0%) were labourers and 52 (44.1%) were civil servants. 3 people (2.5%) did not specify their father's occupation. Finally, 29 (24.6%) of the students who participated in the study were studying in schools with lower socio-economic levels, 40 (33.9%) in schools with middle socio-economic levels and 49 (41.5%) in schools with higher socio-economic levels.

### **Data Collection**

In phenomenological research, in addition to interviews, case studies, root analysis, document analysis and visual analysis methods, data obtained from observation, art, poetry, music and other forms of art (Creswell, 2016) can be used. In this study, using drawings, a form

of art, as a data collection tool was preferred because drawings are not only a general indicator of children's development and skills but also useful in terms of giving clues about their way of thinking. Drawings, one of the well-known daily life activities, have an important place in children's expressing themselves in non-verbal and simple language and conveying what they think as they feel (Yavuzer, 2009). In this context, as the main data collection method in the study, students were asked to think about the learning situations and environments of all social studies courses so far and to make a sample drawing reflecting these. They were also instructed to include the teacher, themselves, and their friends in their drawings. The students were given A4-sized papers and six dry colours during the intervention. In addition, students were given a form containing information about their personal characteristics and some open-ended questions to explain their drawings.

In the development of the data collection tool, relevant studies in the literature (e.g. Akerson, 2017; Arslan Cansever, 2017; Ballıel Ünal, 2017; Ersoy & Türkkkan, 2009; Melanlıoğlu, 2015; Özdemir Özden & Özden, 2015; Şahin Akyüz, 2016; Yalçın & Erginer, 2014; Yalçınkaya, 2015) were examined and an approach similar to Şahin Akyüz's (2016) research was used in the questions asked. The data collection tool was analysed by two social studies education experts in terms of content and one Turkish education expert in terms of language and expression comprehensibility. In addition, a preliminary test was conducted with 20 students. After the relevant corrections, it was made ready for use. The final form consists of two parts. In the first part, questions about gender, grade, report card grade, and mother and father occupation were included. In the second part, questions, including explanations about the sample learning-teaching environment reflected by the participants regarding social studies lessons, were included. These questions were as follows: "Please mark yourself in your drawing and explain what you did in the social studies lesson in your drawing.", "Please mark your social studies teacher in your drawing. Please explain where and what/what your teacher does in the social studies lesson in your drawing.", "Please explain what/what your friends do in your drawing." and "What do you think is missing in the social studies lesson you drew? How would you learn better and more if social studies lessons were like this? Can you tell us what kind of a social studies lesson you imagine?". Including a section where students' opinions about their drawings were taken was preferred because it enabled students to express themselves better (Ersoy & Türkkkan, 2010).



## **Data Analysis**

In the context of data analysis, the initial step involved the identification of drawings to be included in the analysis. Criteria such as the drawings being relevant to the subject, the explanations being sincere, related to the drawing and the subject, and leaving no unanswered questions were examined. As a result of the analysis, 38 drawings were excluded from the analysis. The drawings excluded from the analysis mostly belonged to students from upper socio-economic level schools. Subsequently, the drawings to be analysed were numbered. Students were given a code name with the same number given to the drawing. The research data were analysed by content analysis. The basic process in content analysis is to reach concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data. The following stages were followed for the analysis: (1) coding the data, (2) finding themes, (3) organising the codes and themes, (4) defining and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In the first stage, each drawing was analysed separately, and the drawings' conceptual meaning was determined. According to the conceptual meanings, codes were determined, and an index was created. Then, the indexes were brought together, the codes were analysed, and the codes found were grouped under certain categories and themes reflecting the social studies course, and the content of the drawings in the learning-teaching process was formed. Care was taken to ensure that the themes could describe the data at this stage. As a result, a system was created to organise the data collected through detailed coding in the first stage and thematic coding in this stage. Then, the data were organised and defined according to the codes and themes that emerged by paying attention to the participants' drawings and their explanations about their drawings and grouped according to their common characteristics. In addition, the frequency of occurrence of the data was also analysed and noted. In the last stage, the relationship between the themes and the codes and categories within the themes was explained, and the findings were presented by making quotations from the drawings and participant opinions that were thought to be interesting and important.

In the study, the following strategies were used to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016): (1) Care was taken to make drawings under the supervision of the first researcher for clarity throughout the applications and to explain the points that were not understood. (2) Participants were not given guiding examples during the drawing process and were allowed to reflect on their thoughts. (3) The data analysis process was explained and reported in detail, and the participants' own drawings were included in the analysis and interpretation of the data. (4) The determination of codes, categories, themes and

interpretation of the data were made by the researchers both individually and together. (5) Open-ended questions were used to diversify data sources and to make better interpretations.

### **Compliance with Ethical Standard**

In this study, all the rules specified to be followed within the scope of “Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive” were complied with. The study was approved by the Kutahya Dumlupınar University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee on the meeting dated 13.09.2019.

### **Findings**

Within the framework of the sub-problems formed in the research, the characteristics of the social studies learning-teaching processes in schools were tried to be determined with the help of the drawings made by the students and the explanations for the drawings. Then, students’ expectations for more effective social studies lessons were analysed.

### **Social Studies Learning-Teaching Process Characteristics Reflected in Student Drawings**

The findings regarding the characteristics of the learning-teaching process in social studies classrooms reflected in student drawings were grouped under five theme as *learning-teaching environment*, *learning-teaching elements/features*, *methods and techniques/activities*, *teacher roles and behaviours*, and *student roles and behaviours*. The frequencies of the features within the scope of these dimensions and their distribution according to classes are presented in tables. In addition, some examples of student drawings and opinions are also included. When the students’ drawings were analysed, it was seen that some students made drawings for their imagined learning environments, although they were expected to draw for their current lessons. Accordingly, students’ drawings were analysed as “current social studies lessons” and “imaginary social studies lessons”. The theme of current social studies lessons refers to the current practices taking place in schools. While 96 of the students made drawing reflecting their current social studies lessons, 22 of them drew their imagined social studies lessons.

## Learning-Teaching Environment

The frequencies of social studies learning-teaching environments reflected in student drawings and their distribution according to classes are presented in Table 1. As presented in Table 1, the traditional classroom environment was depicted in the vast majority of student drawings (f=72) and in similar proportions in all classes. Accordingly, it can be said that students mostly think of the social studies course as a lesson in the classroom. The related drawings depicted the classroom with all its details, as in the drawing numbered 76. In 24 students' drawings, social studies lessons in out-of-school environments were included. The related drawings mostly reflected out-of-school learning environments such as *open air* (f=13) and *museums* (f=9) (Drawing 26 - Drawing 19). The drawings, including these learning environments, were mostly made by 6th-grade students. Some drawings, such as the school garden (f=2) and library (f=1), reflect social studies lessons held inside the school and outside the classroom.

**Table 1**

*Social Studies Learning-Teaching Environments Reflected by Students in Their Drawings and Distribution Regarding Grades*

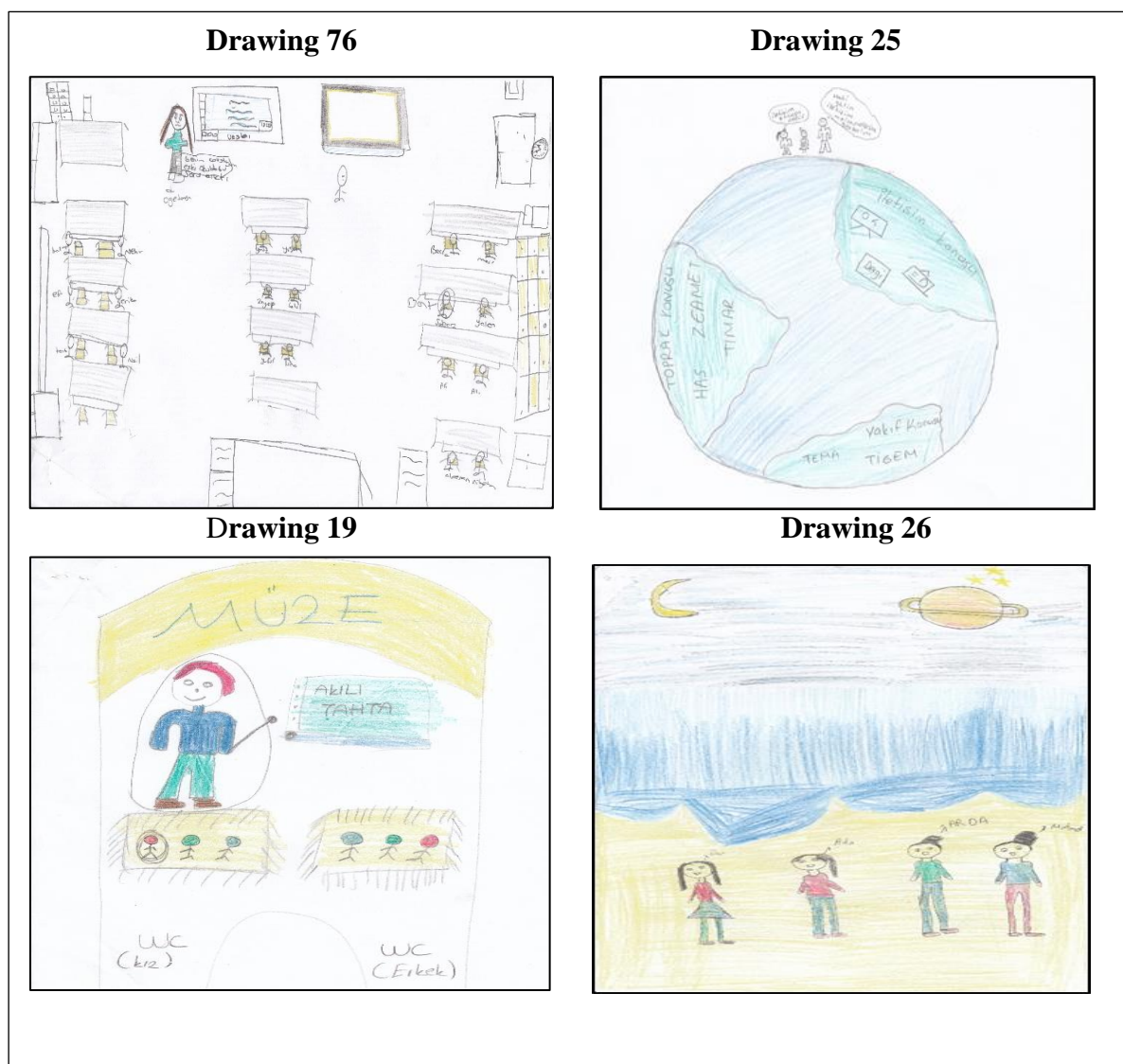
Learning-Teaching Environment	Current Social Studies Lessons				Imaginary Social Studies Lessons			
	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total
Classroom	24	28	20	72				
Open Air	3	5	5	13		1		1
Museum	3	5	1	9		1		1
School Garden		1	1	1				
Library	1			1				
Unrealistic Environment					8	9	2	19

Some students made drawings for imaginary social studies lessons. These drawings generally included *unrealistic learning-teaching environments* such as space, the place where the source of the subject to be learnt is located, and above the clouds. As an example, the student in drawing number 25 indicated that s/he and her/his teacher could go to places on the earth where there was a lot of communication. The related drawings belonged mostly to 6th (f=10) and 5th grade (f=8) students. Some 7th-grade students (f=3) also made drawings involving unrealistic learning environments. The museum (f=1) for the 6th-grade level was the least used environment in imaginary drawings. The fact that the museum included dinosaurs and historical elements such as the Orkhon inscriptions was effective in the evaluation of this drawing as

imaginary, and it was evaluated as imaginary because the existence of such a museum was out of the question.

**Figure 1**

*Drawing Examples of Learning-Teaching Environment*



### Learning-Teaching Elements/Features

The frequencies of the elements of the social studies learning-teaching process reflected in the students' drawings and their distribution according to classes are shown in Table 2. Table 2 shows that the most frequently occurring element ( $f=62$ ) in student drawings related to current social studies classes across all grade levels is the *traditional seating arrangement*. To illustrate this, in Drawing 77, students have mostly depicted the classroom in full detail, showing the

teacher lecturing near the desk and board. An interactive seating arrangement is noticeable in a limited number of drawings (f=2). For instance, in Drawing 21, while students are still sitting in a *traditional seating arrangement*, the teacher is walking around asking questions, and students are participating in the lesson by expressing their opinions.

**Table 2**

*Learning-Teaching Elements/Features of Social Studies Lessons Reflected by Students in Their Drawings and Their Distribution Regarding to Grades*

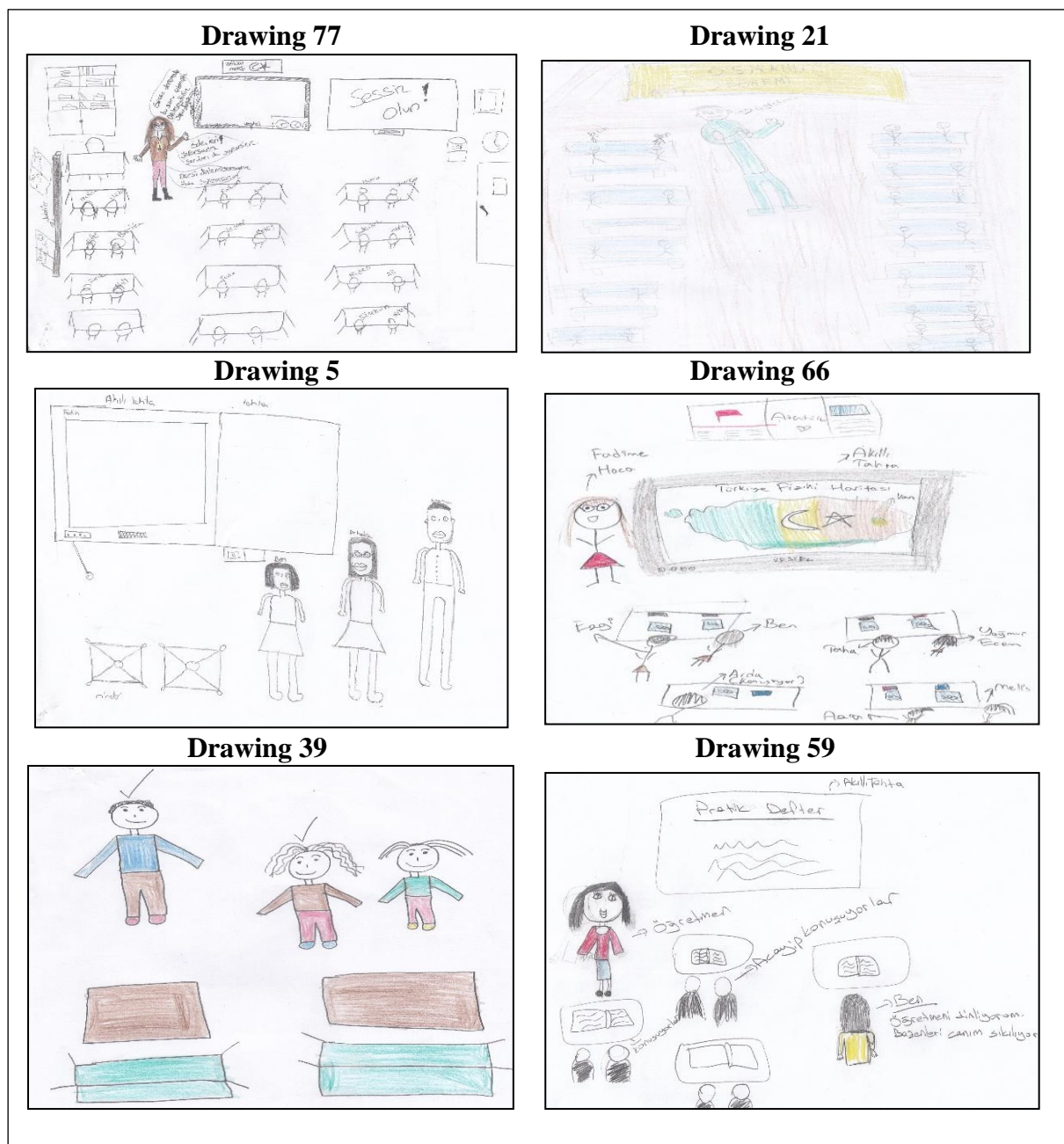
Learning-Teaching Elements/Features	Current Social Studies Lessons				Imaginary Social Studies Lessons			
	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total
Traditional seating arrangement	23	23	19	65	2	2	2	6
Smartboard	14	16	14	44	1	2		3
Whiteboard	9	16	9	34	1	1	2	4
Use of visual material on the board	9	14	8	31				
Book-notebook	10	8	7	25	1	1	1	3
Flexible classroom environment	6	8	9	23	4	2		6
Interactive open seating arrangement	4	12	4	20	4	8		12
Green area	3	6	4	13	6	4	2	12
Historical artefacts	3	6	1	10				
Authority-free classroom	2	2	1	5				
Real objects	1	1		2				
Interactive seating arrangement		1	1	2	1		1	2
Costumed guest		1		1				

Some students (f=20) have not included a seating arrangement in their drawings. These drawings have been coded as *interactive open seating arrangements* because the teachers are depicted close to the students. The majority of such drawings belong to 6th-grade students (f=12). For example, the student who created Drawing 5 has included sitting cushions instead of desks and has depicted conversing with the teacher about the subject. Another notable element in many of the drawings is the presence of *smartboards* (f=44) and *whiteboards* (f=34), as well as the emphasis on the *use of visual materials on the board* (f=31). These visuals usually include maps of Turkey and the world or figures and charts related to the subject. In Drawing 66, for instance, comprehensive information about the interactive whiteboard is provided, including its manufacturer, control features, and affiliation with a governmental initiative. It is generally observed that the teacher is coordinating the lesson with the smart board. Additionally, some drawings (f=25) pay attention to the book and notebooks' details. In

Drawing 66, for example, the presence of an open book and notebook on the desk is emphasised, and a pencil is usually drawn next to the notebook.

**Figure 2**

*Drawing Examples of Learning-Teaching Elements/Features-1*

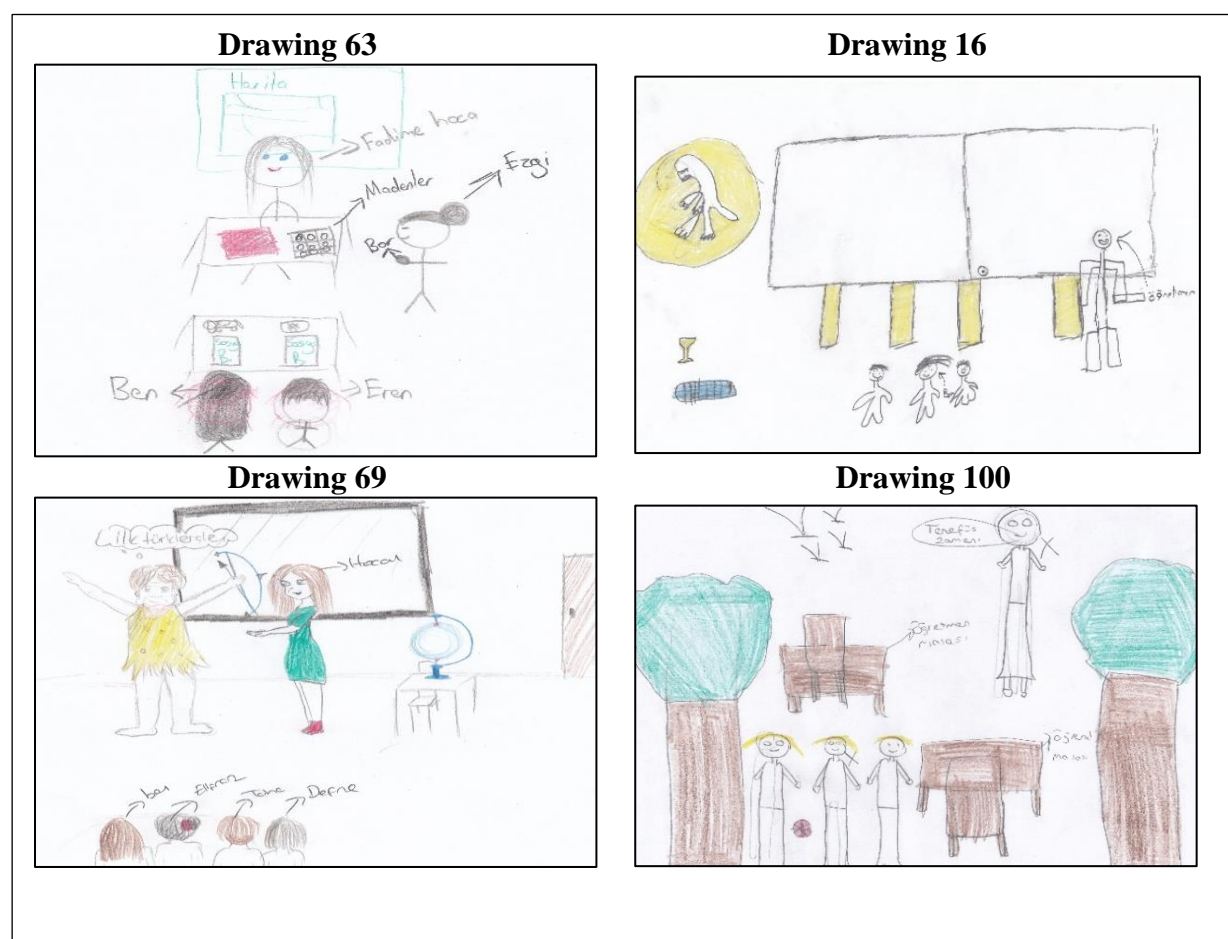


Some students have included drawings that depict a *flexible classroom environment* in addition to the traditional classroom setup (f=23). This code has been used to indicate that students are engaged in different activities during the lesson. For example, the student who

created Drawing 39 has explained, “I go up to my teacher during social studies class to ask a question. Our teacher teaches us at her desk. My friends are reading a passage from the social studies book.” Based on this finding, it can be said that sometimes more flexible learning environments can be created in social studies classes as opposed to authoritative classroom setups. However, in a limited number of student drawings (f=6), there are also reflections indicating the existence of social studies classes that exhibit features of an *authority-free classroom*. While in a flexible classroom environment, students are engaged in various learning activities related to the lesson, in an authority-free classroom environment, students display negative out-of-lesson activities and behaviours. For instance, the student who created Drawing 59 has commented, “Some are listening to the lesson. Some are talking weirdly and throwing shade at each other.”

**Figure 3**

*Drawing Examples of Learning-Teaching Elements/Features-2*





In terms of other elements that attracted attention in fewer student drawings (Figure 3), it is understood that sometimes a *green area* (f=12) is used in social studies lessons, *historical artefacts* such as historical bowls, vases, ancient coins, fossils (f=10, Drawing 16), *real objects* such as mineral samples (f=2, Drawing 63) and *costumed guests* representing a certain period (f=1, Drawing 69) are brought to the lessons. In the drawings of imaginary social studies lessons, it was observed that the students mostly depicted an *interactive open seating* (f=12) and a *green area* (f=12, Drawing 100). On the other hand, some students imagined a *traditional seating arrangement* (f=6) or *interactive seating arrangement* (f=2), *whiteboard* (f=4), *smartboard* (f=3), *book-notebook* (f=3), and even outdoors. In addition, some drawings of imaginary social studies lessons showed a *flexible classroom environment* (f=6). For example, one student stated that they learned by playing games in the forest. In drawing number 27, the student stated that he and his teacher examined the stars through a telescope in the forest.

### Methods and Techniques/Activities

The frequencies of the methods and techniques of social studies courses reflected in the students' drawings and their distribution by grade are shown in Table 3. The frequencies of the methods and techniques of social studies courses reflected in the students' drawings and their distribution by grade are shown in Table 3. According to Table 3, the use of *teacher-centred* (f=80) methods in the majority of the drawings for the current social studies course draws attention. The methods were accepted as teacher-centred in all drawings in which the teacher was reflected more actively.

**Table 3**

*Methods and Techniques/Activities in Social Studies Lessons Reflected by Students in Their Drawings and Distribution Regarding Grades*

Methods and Techniques/Activities	Current Social Studies Lessons				Imaginary Social Studies Lessons			
	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total
Teacher-centred	28	29	23	80	2	3	2	7
Student-centred	2	5	1	8		7		7
One-to-one teaching	1	4	2	7	6	1	1	8

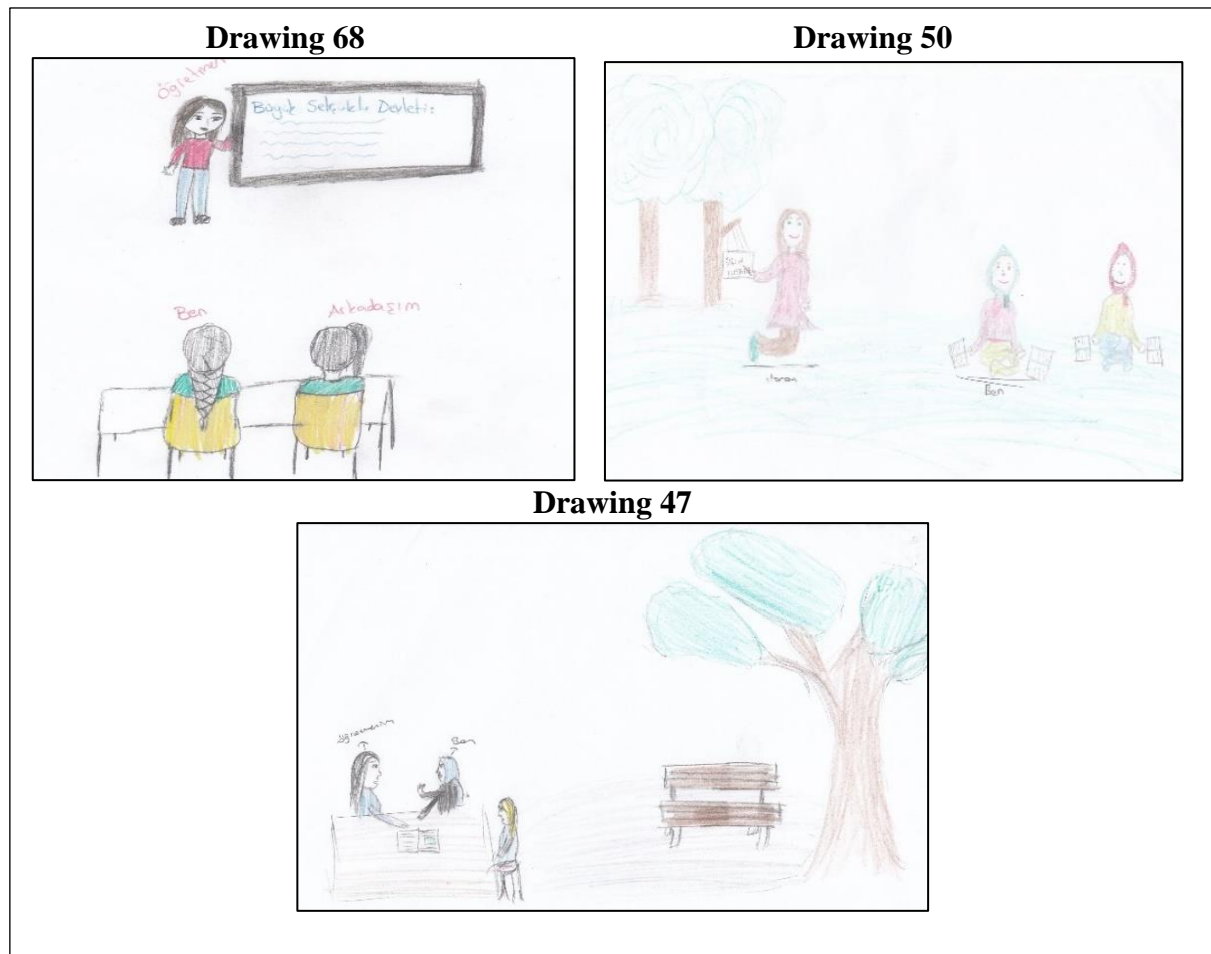
As shown in drawing number 68 and the previous drawings of traditional classroom environments, most of the students portrayed themselves in the classroom listening to the



teacher. Even in the drawings where open air is shown as the learning environment, there are students listening to the teacher. On the other hand, some drawings emphasised *student-centred* (f=8) or *one-to-one* (f=7) methods in which students were more active (Drawing 50). 6th-grade students mostly made the related drawings. In the drawings in which students included their dreams about the social studies course, it is seen that *one-to-one teaching* (f=8), *teacher-centred* (f=7), and *student-centred* (f=7) techniques are used. It can be said that the teacher-centred methods are not dominant in these drawings. The common feature in the imaginary social studies lessons is that students depict out-of-school environments, as seen in Drawing 47. In addition, drawings involving student-centred and one-to-one teaching methods are more intense in 5th and 6th-grade students. Some sample drawings are given below.

**Figure 4**

*Drawing Examples of Methods and Techniques/Activities*



## Teacher Roles and Behaviours

The frequencies of teacher role/behaviours in social studies lessons reflected in student drawings and their distribution according to classes are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Teacher Role/Behaviours in Social Studies Lessons Reflected by Students in Their Drawings and Distribution Regarding Grades*

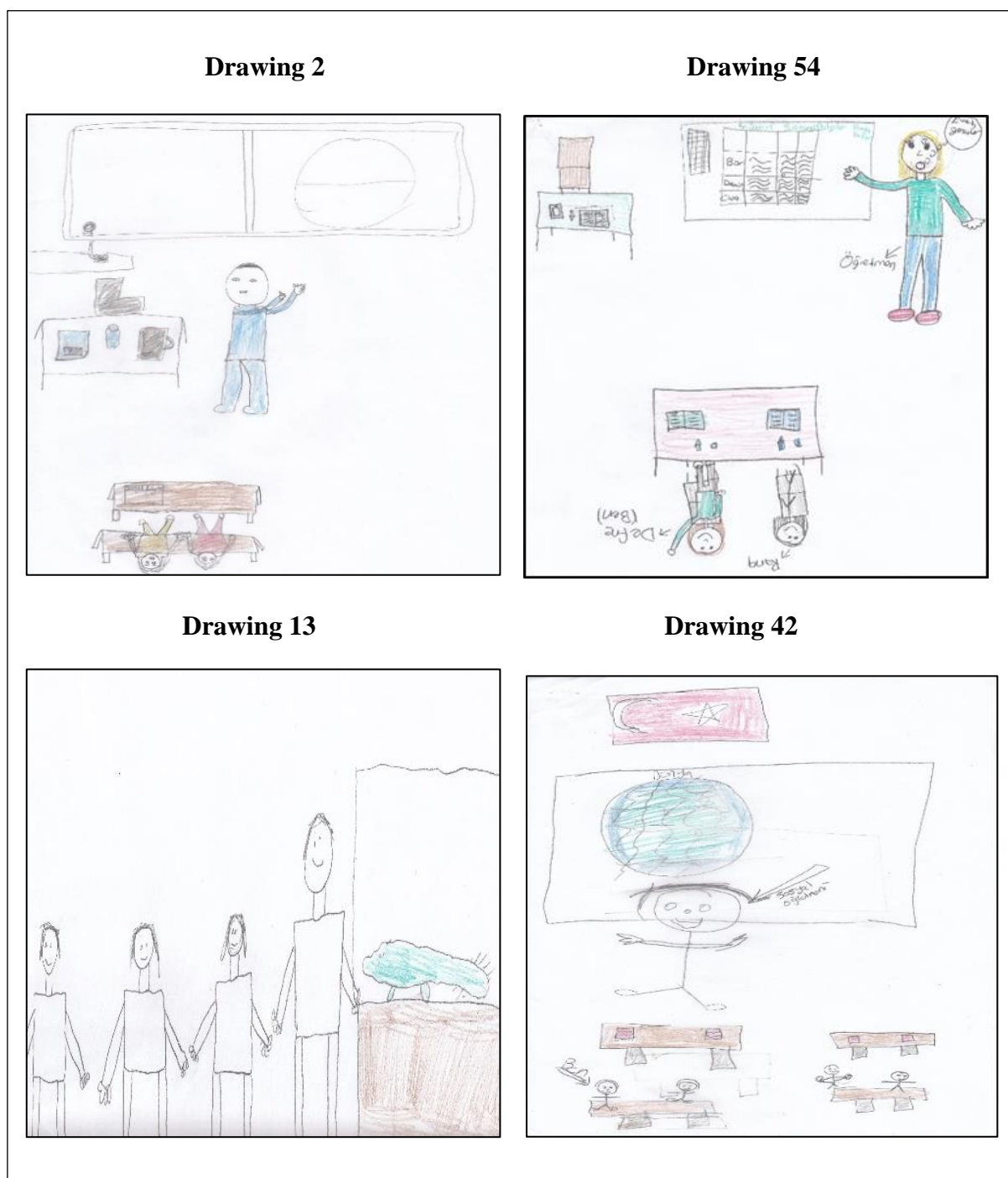
Teacher Roles and Behaviours	Current Social Studies Lessons				Imaginary Social Studies Lessons			
	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total
Making a presentation	25	26	24	75	7	2	2	11
Being next to the whiteboard	18	17	10	45	1	1	2	4
Interactive teaching with students	8	11	5	24	5	6	1	12
Teaching by showing	6	13	3	22	1	7	1	9
Being in front of the class	3	8	8	19				
Using body language	4	5	2	11				
Listening		5		5		1		1
Using costume		1		1		1		1

In Table 4, the teacher's roles and behaviours in the current social studies lesson drawings are reflected as *making a presentation* (f=75), *being next to the whiteboard* (f=45), *interactive teaching with students* (f=24), *teaching by showing* (f=22), *being in front of the class* (f=19), *using body language* (f=11), *listening* (f=5) and *using costume* (f=1). As in Drawing 2, in all classes, the teacher was mostly portrayed as making a presentation (f=75). The students generally described their teacher's role as "*giving a lesson*". Accordingly, it can be understood that students see the social studies course as a course in which teaching is done through an expository instruction method. In addition, in the majority of the drawings, the teachers were either *next to the whiteboard* (f=45) or *in front of the class* (f=19) (Drawing 54).

In some existing drawings of social studies lessons, it was emphasised that although the teacher made a presentation, the teacher gave an *interactive teaching with the students* (f=24). In the drawings, the relevant code was created because the teacher's position in the classroom was far from the board, close to the students, between the desks, and the students stated that they asked questions to the teacher. Also, in some drawings, based on the students' explanations, it is understood that these explanations are based on *teaching by showing* (f=22) and the *use of body language* (f=19) (Drawing 42 and Drawing 13).

**Figure 5**

*Drawing Examples of Teacher Role/Behaviours in Social Studies Lessons-1*



### **Student Roles and Behaviours**

As seen in Table 5, there are 11 roles and behaviours determined as *listening to the lesson* (f=60), *being uninterested* (f=28), *question-answer* (f=21), *interaction with the teacher* (f=16), *note-taking* (f=12), *following the lesson* (f=9), *talking with the teacher* (f=5), *reading*

(f=3), *research* (f=2), *giving a lesson* (f=1) and *giving an example* (f=1). Following the lesson (60) was the student role and behaviour that the students included the most in their drawings. This emphasis is seen at similar rates at all grade levels. Students were usually depicted as sitting at their desks and listening to the teacher, as in drawing number 1. The other most common element related to the role and behaviour of the student in the drawings was being disinterested (f=28). This element is both reflected in the students' drawings and emphasised in their explanations. To illustrate this, student number 56 said, "*I get lost in my thoughts. My teacher gives a boring and sleep-inducing lesson. The front part of the class tries to talk to the back of the class*". Other student behaviours that were more frequently encountered in the drawings were *question-answer* (f=21, Drawing 53), *note-taking* (f=12) and *interaction with the teacher* (f=7).

**Table 5**

*Student Role/Behaviours in Social Studies Lessons Reflected by Students in Their Drawings and Distribution Regarding Grades*

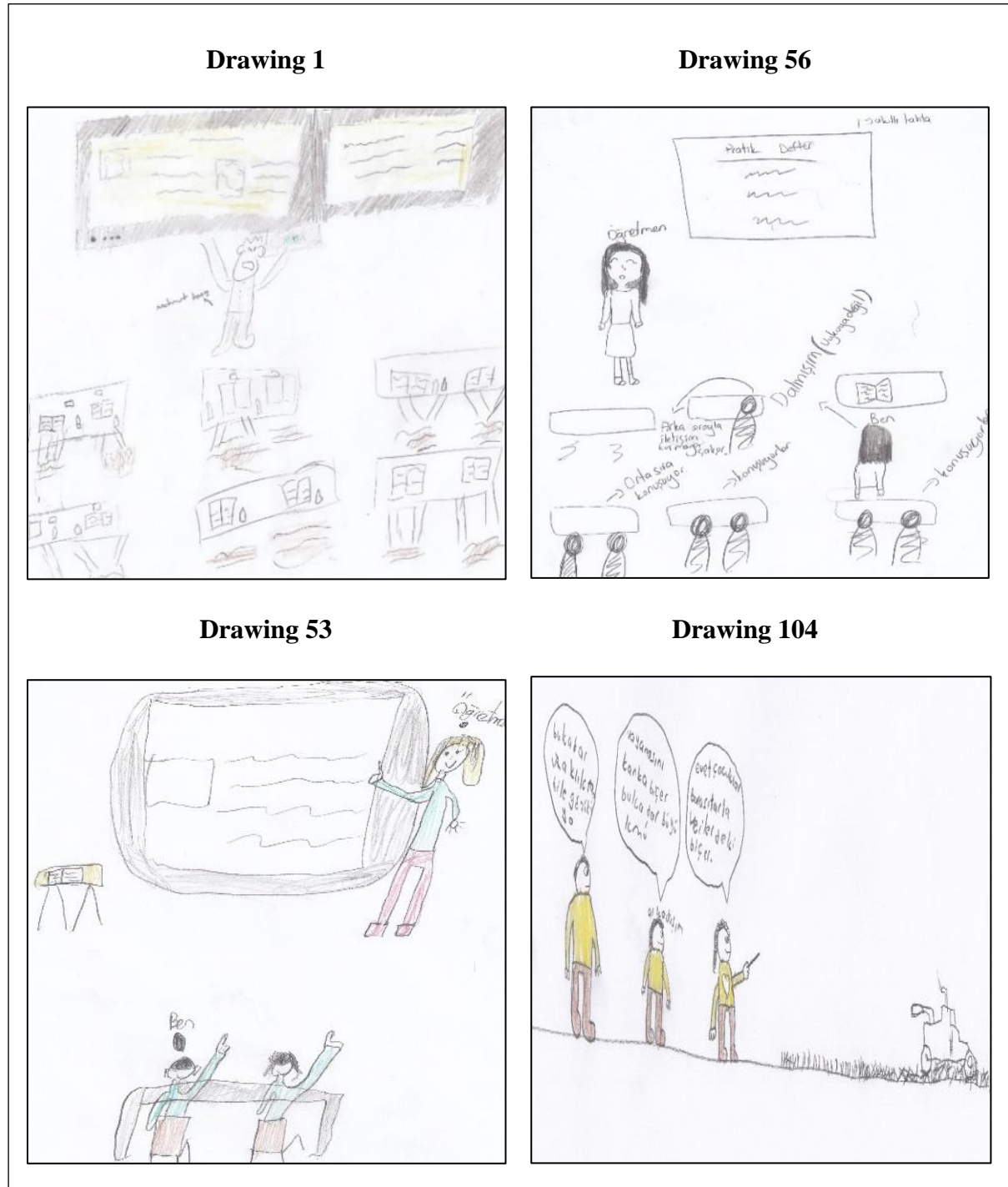
Student Roles and Behaviours	Current Social Studies Lessons				Imaginary Social Studies Lessons			
	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total
Listening to the lesson	15	23	22	60	5	3	1	9
Being uninterested	8	10	10	28	4	2		6
Question and answer	9	5	7	21	1		1	2
Interaction with the teacher	6	7	3	16	2	4	1	7
Note-taking	6	3	3	12			1	1
Following the lesson	4	5		9		4		4
Conversation with the teacher	1	2	2	5		1	1	2
Reading	1	1	1	3		1		1
Research		2		2		1		1
Explaining		1		1				
Giving an example		1		1				
Doing homework					1			1

In the drawings reflecting the imaginary social studies course, *listening to the lesson* (f=9) and *interaction with the teacher* (f=7) were mostly highlighted. Furthermore, roles and behaviours such as *being disinterested* (f=6), *following up the lesson* (f=4), *question-answer* (f=2), *talking to the teacher* (f=2), *taking notes* (f=1), *reading* (f=1), *research* (f=1) and *doing homework* (f=1) were depicted, which are also not very different from the actual lessons. In

Drawing 104, the student noted that the teacher explained the subject of agriculture by taking the student to the field.

**Figure 6**

*Drawing Examples of Student Role/Behaviours in Social Studies Lessons*



## Students' Expectations for Effective Social Studies Courses

In the study context, the students were asked what was missing in their drawings, how they would learn better if social studies lessons were taught, and how they were asked to describe the lesson in their imagination. Thus, the expectations of the students towards the social studies course were tried to be determined. Expectations expressed by the students, their frequencies and distribution according to classes are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Distribution of Students' Expectations towards a More Effective Social Studies Course Regarding Grades*

Expectations for an Effective Social Studies Course	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	Total
<i>Expectations towards the teaching process</i>	26	27	24	77
Fun lesson	6	6	5	17
The use of games	4	8		12
More activities	2	4	3	9
Excursion	6		2	8
The use of figures		1	5	6
Use of visuals	2	2	2	6
Costume use		4	1	5
No writing	3		1	4
Use of music		1	2	3
Drama		3		3
The use of technology	1		2	3
Inviting guests to class	2	1		3
Shadow play		2		2
Use of cartoons			1	1
Providing interesting facts		1		1
Visual learning		1		1
Use of virtual reality		1		1
Conducting research			1	1
More topics related to Atatürk			1	1
Easier lesson			1	1
Not using a smart board	1			1
Prize question	1			1
Studying by eating ice cream	1			1
<i>Expectations for the Classroom Environment</i>	6	6	13	25
Outdoor lesson	5	4	13	22
Noiseless classroom	1	2		3
<i>Expectations towards the Teacher</i>		1	3	4
Being friendly			2	2
Avoidance of negative behaviour			1	1
Helping teacher		1		1
<i>Satisfaction with the Current Lesson</i>	3	3	3	9

As a result of the analysis of the students' responses, the categories of “*expectations towards the classroom environment*”, “*expectations towards the teacher*”, “*expectations towards the teaching process*”, and “*satisfaction with the current course*” were formed.

As can be seen in Table 6, the majority (f=77) of the expectations that the students stated for an effective social studies lesson were related to the teaching process. The most prominent of these expectations are more *fun lessons* (f=17) and *the use of games* (f=12). Then, expectations for *more activities* (f=9), *excursions* (f=8), *use of figures* (f=6), and *use of visuals* (f=6) are noteworthy. 5th-grade students mostly pointed out fun lessons (f=6) and excursions (f=6), 6th-grade students emphasised the use of games (f=8), and 7th-grade students also highlighted more fun lessons (f=5) and the use of figures (f=5). Below are some sample excerpts of student statements containing expectations related to this category:

I would like to wear costumes with more fun games and activities. I would like us to create the subject. I would like to teach it in the garden. I would like a well-known person to come and teach us. (Student 30)

There are no games related to social studies. Playing games related to that subject after the lesson (Student 45).

I think we should teach each different subject in different places. Because we can both see the places we have not seen, and the lesson will be more permanent in our minds. (Student 25)

I think I have fun in the social studies lesson, but if our teacher brings us two or three figures related to what he is telling us, that would be fine. (Student 19)

A significant number of students indicated some expectations about the classroom environment towards effective social studies lessons. Almost all of the students (22) expressed that they preferred the lessons to be conducted *outdoors*, and some students emphasised the expectation of a *noiseless classroom* (3). The majority of those who wanted outdoor lessons were 7th-grade students (13). The expectation of a noiseless classroom was expressed by 5th (1) and 6th (2) grade students.

Some of the students expressed expectations towards the teacher for an effective social studies lesson. In this regard, some 6th-grade students stated that more effective lessons could be taught with a *helping teacher* (1), and some 7th-grade students mentioned that they expected the *teacher to be friendly* (2) and *avoid negative behaviours* (1). In all grade levels, some students (9) stated that they did not have any expectations for their lessons and that they were satisfied with their current lessons. Below are some sample excerpts of student statements containing these expectations:

I would have learnt better if there were more people around and more examples. In my imagination, I imagine the social lesson while sitting in the garden with my teacher and friends, doing different activities about the subject. (Student 47)

My dream social class is spent outside at tables and playing games. (Student 54)

The teacher should stay away from most negative behaviours and conduct the lesson in a friendly manner.” (Student 1)

I think the social studies course lacks a helping teacher; it would be fun if there were an additional teacher, and the lesson would be more impressive. (Student 10)

My dream course is the same as the real one (Student 79)

## **Discussion and Results**

This study aims to determine the characteristics of the learning-teaching process of social studies lessons through the drawings of students who experience social studies lessons in schools. Yavuzer (2019) noted that drawings reflect children’s inner worlds and that a good analysis will provide important information about the child’s perceptions. Based on this understanding, sample studies were conducted to determine the perceptions of students and children towards different courses, concepts, or phenomena. Based on the findings of these studies, it can be asserted that the utilisation of the drawing method constitutes a potent measurement tool for assessing students’ comprehension of their visual and experiential surroundings.

In terms of the results of the research, it was determined that most of the students’ drawings reflecting social studies lessons were related to in-class learning-teaching environments. However, out-of-class and out-of-school learning environments such as outdoors, museums, school gardens and libraries were reflected in relatively limited numbers. Accordingly, it can be said that the most frequently used out-of-class learning environments by teachers are mostly outdoor areas, school gardens, museums and libraries. This can be explained by the study of Malkoç and Kaya (2015). In the related study, it was determined that teachers mostly preferred the school garden, library, gymnasium, multi-purpose hall, corridor, laboratory, and social studies classroom as out-of-class learning environments in social studies teaching, and the most used out-of-class school environment was the garden. In addition, it was determined that 6th-grade students included museum drawings more than 5th and 7th-grade students in the drawings analysed.

As it is known, the social studies curriculum considers it important to benefit from out-of-school environments such as museums, historical buildings, monuments, museum cities and



battlefields in terms of effective teaching (MoNE, 2018). On the other hand, gains for museum education are evident in the 6th grade Culture and Heritage learning area. From this point of view, it can be thought that the students' going to a museum or a trip both in the classroom environment and as an out-of-class activity was more effective and memorable for them, and they reflected this situation more in their drawings. In support of this research result, in Solmaz's (2015) study, teachers stated that museum education in social studies courses is essential in terms of concretising the lesson, facilitating learning, ensuring the retention of information and teaching history subjects. In parallel with this, many experimental studies (Çerkez, 2011; Filiz, 2010; Güleç & Alkış, 2003; Meydan & Akkuş, 2014; Şişman, 2019) concluded that the use of museums in social studies courses improves students' cognitive skills, increases their academic achievement, makes the lesson concrete, facilitates the teaching of history topics, enables students to enjoy the lesson and develop positive attitudes towards the lesson.

As a result of the research, it becomes evident that there is a significant need to enhance and broaden the utilisation of extracurricular learning environments, even though conventional teaching primarily occurs within the confines of the classroom. Because in this study, a significant portion of the students expressed an expectation for outdoor learning and excursions. The preference for out-of-class and out-of-school environments is striking in all drawings of imaginary social studies lessons. In the related drawings, it was determined that they included unrealistic learning environments and lessons in the open air, especially in the green area, although the teacher activity was dominant. In the study of Baysal et al. (2018), in which a similar result was reached in the literature, students stated that they mostly wanted to teach the lesson in outdoor environments such as nature, school garden, gazebo, orchard. Therefore, it can be thought that students long for social studies lessons in non-traditional learning environments, and it can be said that lessons held in out-of-class environments can support students' social development as well as provide more effective and permanent learning. As a matter of fact, there are various studies in the literature that determine that garden-based education activities improve students' social skills and contribute to their learning experiences (Malkoç & Kaya, 2015; Skinner & Chi, 2012). In addition, there are studies showing that teachers do not frequently prefer out-of-class activities in social studies, but they increase students' attitudes towards the course and positively affect student achievement (Güngören, 2015; Karakaş et al., 2017). All these results can be accepted as evidence that social studies courses should be enriched with learning outside the classroom and school.

It was determined that the students mostly reflected the traditional order in their drawings. As stated before and reflected in the students' drawings, it can be thought that such an order is reflected predominantly due to the use of learning environments for the classroom in social studies lessons. In the study of Kuş and Çelikkaya (2010), teachers stated that they mostly used the traditional order, then cluster or U order in social studies lessons. In the study conducted by Aykaç (2012), it was determined that elementary school students made drawings expressing traditional order, semicircle and U order, respectively. In this study, some of the students' imaginary drawings included drawings reflecting the intense interaction between the teacher and the students instead of a sequential order in the classroom. In the study conducted by Karaman and Akbaba (2020), it was concluded that students imagined the classroom order in the social studies course in the form of flying desks and flexible desks. In this respect, it can be said that students prefer classroom environments where they can interact better with their teachers instead of a traditional seating arrangement. In the study conducted by McGowan et al. (1990), it was concluded that students' attitudes towards the social studies course were determined by the teacher's interaction with the students. Therefore, it is clear that there is a need for a significant transformation of classroom organisation in schools.

In the study, the smart board was one of the most reflected elements for all grade levels. It was noticed that students included even details such as the state project to which the board is connected and formal elements in their drawings of smart boards. Since students reflected smart boards in their drawings in such a detailed way, it can be inferred that social studies courses are smart board-oriented. In the related literature, it has been determined that teachers use smart boards for reasons such as reinforcing the lesson, attracting attention, enriching with examples, making it fun, facilitating the expression of abstract concepts and increasing academic achievement (Çoklar & Tercan, 2014; Eren, 2018; Karaca, 2018). Related reasons may have increased the use of smart boards in social studies lessons. However, when considering together with the results of the study that the lessons based on teacher presentation are intensive, it seems that the smart board is only used to support the teacher's presentation

In this study, in most of the student drawings of existing social studies lessons, the book and notebook element was frequently used in addition to the smart board. In the related drawings, the presence of the book and notebook opened on the desk was emphasised, and the pen was usually drawn next to the notebook. In detail, the fact that one of the students who included the related drawing stated that the first thing that came to his mind was the textbook in a dissatisfied manner may suggest that he had a dislike for the use of books in the lesson and

that the lesson was mostly book-oriented. In the literature, it has been concluded in various studies that materials such as smart boards and textbooks are frequently used in lessons (Akengin & Demirsoy, 2011; Baysal et al. 2018). In the research conducted by Alazzi & Chiodo (2004), they identified textbooks as the basic teaching tool for in-depth social studies topics, similar to those that have become widespread. Accordingly, it can be thought that teachers use teaching materials in a traditional way, do not diversify them sufficiently or do not structure them in a way that makes students active.

In the results of the research on student expectations, some students expressed their boredom with traditional practices with expectation expressions such as not using smartboards and not writing. In addition, many students emphasised that they needed more fun lessons with more activities, diversification of the learning environment in a wide range of subjects such as music, cartoons, shadow play, virtual reality, figures, visuals, costumes, use of technology and bringing experts to the lesson.

In the students' drawings, social studies lessons were mostly reflected as teacher-centred methods and techniques based on teacher presentation. Similarly, in the learning-teaching process features reflected in the drawings, it was determined that the students were mostly reflected as sitting in a row and listening to the lesson. Accordingly, it can be said that students mostly passively listen to the social studies lesson and see it as a lesson in which the teacher gives a lecture. In the literature, there are many studies determining that teachers mostly use teacher-centred methods such as lecture and question-answer in social studies lessons (Akengin & Demirsoy, 2011; Akgül, 2006; Akşit, 2011; Aydemir, 2012; Aykaç, 2012; Coşkun Cımbız, 2016; Çelikkaya & Kuş, 2009; Ergani, 2010; Karaca, 2017; Polat, 2006; Ünal, 2012).

In the research developed by Hansberry and Moroz (2001), detailed social studies are found to be interesting due to its in-depth, teacher-centered and direct narrative structure. In the studies, it was found that teachers stated that they used teacher-centred methods (Çelikkaya & Kuş, 2009; Erdoğan, 2010) for many reasons, such as overcrowded classrooms, limited class time and intensive curriculum, lack of adequate equipment in terms of tools and materials, and students' exam anxiety. However, there are many studies revealing the positive effects of using student-centred methods on students. Öztürk and Baysal (1999) concluded that the use of lectures and intensive use of books in social studies lessons did not make a significant difference in students' attitudes towards the course, while activities such as cluster work, question-answer, discussion, game, excursion-observation made a significant difference in students' attitudes towards the course. All these results show that neither the national curriculum nor the

expectations of the students in this and other research for learning-teaching processes in which students are active in learning environments have been met. It is clear that a comprehensive and decisive reform is needed.

In the students' drawings about the class element that lacks authority, it was determined that the students were bored with the lesson and engaged in extracurricular activities. Based on this, it can be said that students see the social studies course as a boring and monotonous course. In a similar study supporting this result in the literature, Lammons Busey (2013) found that Latino students in 6th, 7th and 8th grades expressed the social studies course as a course with unnecessary, boring, uninteresting subjects and methods. In this context, it can be thought that students want to teach the course with activity-oriented and interesting elements. In the literature, there are various studies that conclude that the use of educational games in social studies courses increases students' interest and participation in the course, ensures the permanence of their learning and positively affects their course success (Altınbulak et al., 2006; Pehlivan, 1997; Uygun et al., 2018).

Regarding the learning-teaching elements in the social studies course, it was observed that the students reflected the real objects brought by the teacher to the class in their drawings. The students who included the relevant drawings stated that they learned better with the use of these objects and figures in the lesson. Considering this, it can be thought that the real objects and figures brought to the classroom in the social studies course are more effective in students' learning and that students want to learn with new methods and techniques and different applications in the course. In this context, it can be thought that students want to be active in the lesson, to make their own decisions about the lesson by experiencing the lesson beyond just taking notes of what the teacher says and that it would be appropriate to teach the lessons with active learning strategies. In addition, various studies in the literature show that using active learning techniques in social studies teaching is beneficial for students (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2004; Bodur, 2011; Çelikkan, 2010; Soylu Erdoğan, 2010). To illustrate, Ayva (2010) found that the use of active learning practices in the social studies learning and teaching process enabled students to participate in and enjoy the lesson. In their study, Duman and Şahiner (2008) determined that the use of active learning in the social studies course both developed democratic attitudes and positively affected students' achievement. In addition, Kalem and Fer (2003) determined that the lesson taught with active learning principles positively affected students, provided enriched lesson environments, and enabled students to enjoy the lesson. In the research developed by Chiodo and Byford (2004), the characteristics of a classroom environment and a cheerful

teacher's way of being actively provided for the development of positive attitudes towards the depths of social studies were determined. In the research conducted by Schug et al. (1982), which investigated whether people find social studies-related subjects interesting, it was established that they used active teaching techniques such as more group projects, field trips, role playing and simulation in the course.

This research has important results in terms of revealing how secondary school students perceive the social studies course learning-teaching process through their drawings. In the research, it was determined that the students mostly took the social studies course in the traditional order in the classroom learning environment and that the teacher reflected it in their drawings as an active narrator. However, it was observed that during the lesson, students generally acted as passive listeners, indifferent or answering the teacher's questions. It can be said that in the drawings in which the students' dreams are included, there is an environment exactly opposite to what is reflected. So much so that students drew their imaginary social studies course process outside the classroom and in flexible learning environments, with one-on-one teaching opportunities with their teachers.

It was concluded that the students' expectations for a more effective social studies course were shaped by the use of alternative teaching methods and techniques such as fun, diverse in terms of games and activities, excursions, music and drama, just as they included in their imaginary drawings. Based on this, it can be said that students want the social studies course to be handled with a constructivist and student-centered approach, apart from traditional practices.

Although this study has important results that reveal how the social studies course learning-teaching process is perceived and realised through the drawings of secondary school students, it has some limitations. First of all, the study was conducted only with 118 secondary school students studying in three schools in Isparta city centre. In other words, it can be seen as limited to the meaning of social studies lessons in these three schools. The main data collection source of the study is drawings, and the explanations for these drawings are limited.

### **Recommendations**

In the context of the results obtained in this research, the following suggestions can be made:

- It may be recommended that teachers use out-of-class learning environments more, interact more with students, and include more out-of-class and out-of-school learning activities in the learning environment.
- Teachers may be advised to support students' more active participation in the lesson and to create classroom environments in which students are active.
- It may be suggested that teachers should be warmer and have a more positive attitude towards the class.
- It may be suggested that teachers make the lesson more fun and support the lesson with more different activities and educational games.
- It may be recommended to choose flexible and interactive desk layouts in classrooms.
- The field can be described in detail through case studies enriched with different samples and different data collection methods.
- In order to obtain more concrete and in-depth ideas from students, drawing exercises can be combined with semi-structured interviews, observations, etc. It can be supported by different data collection methods such as.

### **Ethics Committee Permission Information**

Name of the Board that Made the Ethical Evaluation: Kütahya Dumlupınar University

Date of Ethical Review Decision: 13.09.2019

Ethics Assessment Document Issue Number: 56120658-044-

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