

TIME CAPSULE APPLICATION IN SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE

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ABSTRACT

In this study, an activity has been implemented towards “time, continuity and change” learning strand of the 5th grade social studies curriculum. The first level of the activity was done in November 2015 and the second level of the activity was done in December 2016. The activity was implemented at a secondary school in Ordu. This activity aimed to help students see the change and development of themselves and their friends in social fields, environment, country and world. Accordingly, using the material list that was prepared with the students, a time capsule was prepared, sealed and hid to re-open one year later. The time capsule helped students recognize physical changes in them through a hand print on a paper. Besides, the students understood that their social environment and taste of lives changed dramatically. They noted the changes in our country with the help of economy section of the newspapers.

Keywords: social studies, time-continuity-change learning strand, time capsule.

SOSYAL BİLGİLER DERSİNDE ZAMAN KAPSÜLÜ UYGULAMASI

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada ilköğretim 5. sınıf Sosyal Bilgiler Dersi Öğretim Programında yer alan “Zaman, Süreklilik ve Değişim” öğrenme alanına yönelik bir zaman kapsülü etkinliği düzenlenmiştir. Etkinliğin 2015 yılının Kasım ayında ilk aşaması, 2016 yılının Aralık ayında ise ikinci aşaması uygulanmıştır. Etkinlik Ordu ili Altınordu ilçesinde bulunan 2015 yılında 5. sınıf, 2016 yılında 6. sınıf olan Atatürk Ortaokulu öğrencileri ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu etkinlikte, öğrencilerin zaman içinde hem kendilerinin hem de sınıf arkadaşlarının fiziksel, zihinsel, duyuşsal ve sosyal alandaki değişimi ve gelişimleri ile çevrelerinde, ülkemizde ve dünyadaki değişimin nasıl gerçekleştiğini görmeleri amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda öğrencilerle birlikte oluşturulan bir materyal listesi çerçevesinde zaman kapsülü hazırlanmış ve mühürlenerek kapatılan zaman kapsülü bir yıl sonra açılmıştır. Gerçekleştirilen etkinlik sonucunda öğrencilerin özellikle geçen zamanda bireysel olarak el izlerinden hareketle ne kadar büyüdükleri, sosyal çevrelerinde ciddi değişiklikler olduğu, zevklerinin değiştiği ve ülkemiz adına ise gazete gupüründeki ekonomi bilgilerinden hareketle değişimi görme ve yorumlama şansı yakaladıkları görülmüştür.

Anahtar kelimeler: sosyal bilgiler, zaman-süreklilik-değişim öğrenme alanı, zaman kapsülü.

Article Information:

Submitted: 01.10.2017

Accepted: 02.27.2017

Online Published: 05.08.2017

INTRODUCTION

In today's educational systems, it is recommended that educators, teachers, and students, with a developmentally appropriate approach, apply some methods and tools used by pure historians to teach the concept of historical change to the students. Teachers prefer activities that encourage students to explore the past through intense personal participation (Maxim, 1997). A technique that helps students become young historians who learn by actively discovering the content of the course with historical meanings is using a "time capsule". Time capsules include collections of items and works for specific periods, improve children's understanding of historical change, and increase students' interest in historical content (Maxim, 1997).

Time capsules are boxes that are closed for reopening at a later time. While the use of time capsules in education is not a new phenomenon, it can be said that they are very suitable tools for social studies lessons. Through the time capsules, children record information and graphics about themselves and the environment, and find opportunities to observe the change over time (Stafford-Levy, 2007).

In Alberta, Canada, a study began in which students were asked to decide what they would like to include in the time capsule by deciding on the five most popular items in 2012. According to the data obtained from approximately 6000 participants, the items to be placed in the time capsule are listed as follows (Alberta Legislature Time Capsule [ALTC], n.d.):

- Student letters with predictions about the future
- Coins
- Newspapers
- Photos of the place reserved for time capsule storage
- School photos

The time capsule application can be used as an activity in accordance with the curriculum of the social studies course, especially in the teaching of history and temporal changes.

"Time, Continuity and Change" strand is included in Social Studies Curriculum from 4th to 7th grade. While the strand of "Time, Continuity and Change" is integrated into other strands in the 4th grade, there are related content standards in 3 units. Similarly, it is integrated into other strands in the 5th grade and included in content standards in 2 units (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2005a). In the 6th and 7th grades, "Time, Continuity and Change" learning strand is considered in other learning strands (MoNE, 2005b).

In relation to this learning strand, the following expressions are included in the curriculum (MoNE, 2005a):

This strand meets the need of students to understand their roots and the timeperiod that they live in, and helps them to establish a past-present-future connection. Students understand who they are, what happened in the past, connecting with the past, and the world's change and its future. They try to explain the emotional ties of people with the past and the places they lived in the history of humankind through the perspective of chronology, change and continuity. (p.48)

This activity, which is the subject of this article, is considered as an important work in time, continuity, and change strand to support the students in acquiring the skills such as being able to establish the past, present and future connections and to be able to notice changes in the world and their environment.

A review of literature related to educational applications of time capsules reveals that domestic and foreign research studies are few. Several studies have been included in the literature as scientific activities (Maxim, 1997, Stafford-Levy, 2007). One of these scientific activity studies (Stafford-Levy, 2007) is expressed as reflections from a time capsule created to reveal how a teacher's professional experiences have changed over time, and the other (Maxim, 1997) is "Time Capsule: the tools of a class historian."

In a research conducted with the primary school students on the concept of Historical Time, it was found that students were successful at "moderate level" in perceiving "change and continuity" and were successful at "very high level" in describing "change" with examples, but they have not been successful enough to express "continuity" with examples (Şimşek, 2006). Despite attracting the childrens' attention to many examples that emphasize the change in their life and school life, the fact that there is no clear emphasis on continuity has been shown as the reason for this finding (Şimşek, 2006). In another study, it was determined that the majority of the students who participated in the research were very successful in terms of their ability to perceive change and continuity, and it was stated that it would be beneficial to encourage change and continuity visually by acting on the meaningful examples for the students (Özen & Sağlam, 2010).

In this study, it is aimed to contribute to students' perception of "time, continuity and change" which is one of the learning areas of social studies in the 5th grade and also to enable the students to notice how the contents of the capsules changed over time, how much they changed at the same time and how their environment changed.

ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION

Title: Let's Make a Time Capsule

Goal: In this activity, it is aimed to help students to notice changes in the knowledge they recorded about themselves and their class in a year and to be able to recognize this change.

The Target Group: The study group of the study consisted of 22 students who were in the 5th grade during the first year of the study and in 6th grade during the second year of the study in a public school in the province of Altunordu in Ordu.

Materials:

- A box (chest) that can be used as a capsule
- Large envelopes (one for each student)
- Rope and candle to close the capsule

- Seal to seal the molten wax

The three stages of the activity carried out in this study are explained below.

Phase 1: Preparing and Closing the Time Capsule

In November 2015-2016 academic year, the first phase of the activity, the preparation and storage of the time capsule, was carried out.

At the beginning of the activity, drawing on the concept of time, a large group discussion was held about the concept of change that is continuous over time to help the students understand that the change was continuous. As a result of the large group discussion, it was found that the students were knowledgeable about time capsules. The pupils expressed that they knew about the time capsule using connotations as follows: *"Time capsules are sent to the future, I heard that they have been sent away to space, write a letter to the future, etc."* Then, the students were informed about the aims of this activity and the targets that were eventually expected to be reached. It was stated that children would prepare a classroom time capsule to see how they grow up and change during one school year, and to observe what will change in their surroundings, in our country and in the world within a year. They are told to think about the things they want to put in the time capsule. Using brainstorming technique with children, we talked about materials that could be placed in the time capsule. Children wanted to include things like pictures of themselves, stories they write, facts about them, and a daily classroom program, then the following list of objects that can be put into the time capsule was formed by reconsidering the initial ideas:

- A letter to future
- An example from that day's newspaper clippings (especially the section on economy)
- An item that he wants to send to the future
- Handprint
- A photo of their own

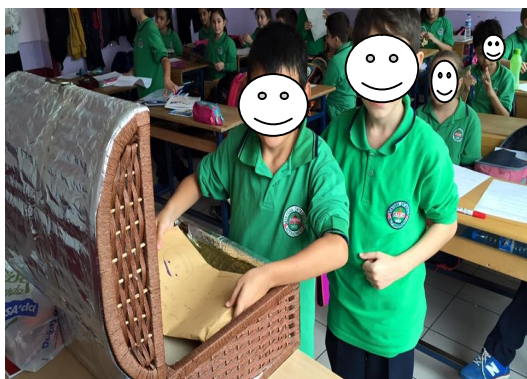
- A photo from home or school
- Favorite songs
- Favorite artists

Students are given one week to complete the materials they want to put into the capsule according to the list created. A week later, the researcher visited the classroom again during the Social Studies lesson, distributed the envelopes on which the student names were written and the worksheet in Appendix 1 to the students and asked students to answer the questions in the worksheet and place it into the envelope together with the other materials.



Photograph 1. *Students Complete the Worksheet*

They are then asked to seal and place these envelopes in the time capsule in turn.



Photograph 2. *Students Place Their Envelopes into the Time Capsule*

The students placed the envelopes they closed in turn in the time capsule. The time capsule,

which was made out of gelatin-coated chest and included student materials, was wrapped with a sturdy rope. In order to prevent the opening of the time capsule by someone else and to establish a historical connection, the candle was melted and dripped on the rope knot point and sealed with a seal. Thus, the students were ensured that no one would be able to open the capsule without their knowledge.



Photograph 3. *The Researcher Seals the Time Capsule*

At the end of the lesson, time capsule that was closed with the seal was taken to the appropriate area of the school administration together with the students and the students were told that the capsule would stay there for one year.



Photograph 4. *Students Carry the Time Capsule to Hide*

Phase 2: Opening the Time Capsule and Sharing

In December 2016-2017 academic year, the second phase of the activity, opening the time capsule and declaring opinions about the stored materials, was conducted.

When the time capsule was opened, we made sure that each envelope was opened by its owner. Later, children were asked to think about the hidden materials to see how they changed as individuals and as a group.



Photograph 5. *Opening the Time Capsule in Front of the Students*

Students were first asked to come and take their individual envelopes. Students were told to open their envelopes and spend time with the stuff they put into the envelope. Later, students who wanted to share were called to the board and were asked to give information to the class about the things in the envelope, what they saw and felt. For example, a student commented, "I do not like this toy that I loved very much last year, how much I grew up looking at my handprint, how much the price of nuts has fallen, how much the dollar has risen."



Photograph 6. *Students Open the Envelopes and Make Evaluations*

In order to make it easier for the students to notice the change over time, the researcher shared her opinions about some materials in the class.



Photograph 7. *Evaluating the Materials in the Time Capsule*



Photograph 8. *Sharing the Learning Experiences and Results of the Activity*

Phase 3: Obtaining Student Views on Time Capsule Implementation

The last phase of this activity is to evaluate the student learning and getting their opinions about this activity. At this point, the researcher posed the following questions to the students:

1. What are your thoughts about the changes that have taken place while the time capsule has been closed?
2. How did you feel during the time period between when the time capsule was closed and opened?
3. Do you think that this activity could be implemented differently? How?
4. Would you like to take part in such an activity again?

Some of the student responses to question 1 are: *"A new building was built next to our house, we did not have a green space; The price of nuts has dropped and the buying power has decreased; I have grown up, had a brother, etc."* Some of the student responses to question 2 are as follows: *"I was very excited, it has been difficult to spend a year; I missed the toy that I put in the envelope; I could not wait to read the letter I wrote myself, etc."* Some of the student responses to question 3 are as follows: *"It would be better to bury the chest; we could put other materials; the time capsule could be kept for more years such as 50 years, etc."* One student's response to the question 4 is as follows: *"Yes, I would like to, but for a longer time."* According to students' responses, we may conclude that the activity had a positive effect on the students.

Evaluation of the Activity

In this activity, students have been provided with the opportunity to see the changes in their physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects of their own and their classmates over time, and how our country and the world have changed within the same time period.

CONCLUSIONS and SUGGESTIONS

During this activity, the students had opportunities to observe and understand how much they have grown up physically by examining their handprints; the changes in their tastes and social environment; the physical, mental, emotional, and social

changes in their classmates and how they have developed; and changes in our country by reading the economic information in the newspapers.

It is also possible to implement different applications while time capsules are being prepared. Following the completion of time capsules, teachers can use some discussion questions about the activity as explained in this paper. These questions can lead to the establishment of a connection between past and present.

One of the most important messages that students need to understand in this activity is the fact that change is constant over time. The time capsule can help people understand the past by letting them think through the past with a historical perspective. Thus, it can be ensured that students can develop a sense of time and space to identify their identities as citizens.

This activity can be suggested as an activity that all social studies teachers can easily apply in their classes. With the experience gained in this application and with the light of literature, some suggestions that the teacher should pay attention to during the application of the activity may be listed as follows (ALTC, n.d.):

- Time capsules should be personal and meaningful.
- Time capsules should aim to create a historical perspective.
- Students should think that time capsules represent a part of their history.
- Photos, albums, movies, books, newspapers and other loved items are great example materials to be put into time capsules.
- Each capsule should represent the individual, i.e. the student.
- Teachers can choose subcategories such as You, Your School, Your City, and Your Country. Students may think of other categories.
- The capsule should be opened at a date that was decided with students. This

- may be the last day of the semester, the last week, etc.

In other time capsule applications, the following suggestions can be made for researchers:

- The time capsule may be prepared at the beginning of middle school (grade 5) and opened at the end (grade 8). Keeping a long time would allow students to see the change more clearly.
- If an area or capsule that can be protected from moisture is available, the capsule could be buried in the school garden. But you need to make sure that your time capsule is in a safe place.

- Teachers can easily implement time capsule in secondary school history courses. A related activity might be planned and its results might be reported in future studies.
- It may be possible to carry out long-term educational time capsule activity and ceremony to be attended by more than one school.

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Citation Information

Öztürk, F. Z. (2017). Time capsule application in social studies course. *Journal of Inquiry Based Activities*, 7(1), 1-8. Retrieved from <http://www.ated.info.tr/index.php/ated/issue/view/13>

Appendix 1

Time Capsule Worksheet

The answers to these questions will be stored in the time capsule. Let's see how much you will change over time.

Name Lastname:

Date:

Signature:

What is the name of your favorite song?

.....

What is the name of your favorite movie?

.....

What is the name of your favorite TV program?

.....

What is the name of your favorite sports club?

.....

What is the food you love to eat the most outdoors?

.....

What is your favorite subject at school?

.....

Who is your favorite teacher?

.....

Who is your best friend?

.....

What do you want to be when you grow up? Why?

.....

I want the following to be real until next year:

-
-
-