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Learning to Use Historical Evidence: Reflections from the Experiences of Prospective Social Studies Teachers

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A preliminary version of this study was presented at the International Congress of Eurasian Social Sciences- 4 held in Muğla, Turkey, October 15-18, 2020.

Learning to Use Historical Evidence: Reflections from the Experiences of Prospective Social Studies Teachers*

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the perceptions and experiences of prospective social studies teachers who created learning and teaching activities using historical evidence. We used the case study methodology in our study and collected data from the activities the prospective teachers created and from research stories, focus group interviews, and observations. We evaluated the data obtained using content analysis and presented it in tables. Our results demonstrated that while before the implementation, prospective teachers qualified internet sources as more reliable, their opinion changed, and after the implementation, they selected (primary) sources belonging to the time period being studied as reliable sources. Moreover, participants highlighted that the use of historical evidence offers important pedagogical benefits, such as learning without memorization and in-depth, permanent learning. Based on these observations, we suggest that the use of evidence should become part of lessons from the first stages of education.

Keywords: Historical evidence, social studies, prospective teachers, experience

Introduction

As students' personal views and current beliefs change over time, understanding how they interpret information is important in the educational process (Hofer, 2004). Ready-to-use information directly given in learning and teaching environments provides students with only one truth in terms of the interpretation and justification of information. This leads students to be limited to only the information that teachers taught or that was provided in the textbook, and thus, they become passive individuals who only reproduce the same information repeatedly. In an educational environment where only textbooks are used, students will assume that the textbook contains all the necessary information and that this information is completely correct and reliable. With such a thought, students do not need to seek different sources, question, or use

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their critical thinking skills (Dogan & Dinc, 2007; Donmez & Altikulac, 2014; Hicks et al., 2012; Monte-Sano, 2008; Morgan & Rasinski, 2012).

In contrast, enriching the learning environment with different sources and evidence provokes students to become active individuals with a constructive understanding. To provide students with such an understanding, teachers should also review various historical sources and evidence, such as documents, photographs, objects, and oral history studies, in addition to the information included in the textbooks. When students use this evidence, they will not only read or listen to information but also develop various skills, such as creating, establishing relationships, organizing, and strategizing. Furthermore, the use of such education activities improves students' learning levels (Barton, 1997; Hicks et al., 2012; Morgan & Rasinski, 2012).

The use of evidence, which is effective in developing student learning capacity, can be applied at all levels of education and in all classes. It is especially important to use evidence in social studies courses. In social studies, students can conduct everyday life research on the past, participate in local history and oral history studies, examine real objects or topics of interest, and make inferences to use or collect evidence. Moreover, by using the evidence correctly, students can perceive and evaluate changes and continuity, answer existing questions, and develop arguments (Fogo, 2014; Kabapinar, 2019; Kabapinar & Yetis, 2019; National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2013; van Hover et al., 2016; von Heyking, 2004).

Students use primary and secondary sources to use and interpret evidence. Primary and secondary sources include materials such as letters, diaries, journals, documents, interview transcripts, changing landscapes, photographs, speeches, real objects, and even DNA. These sources contain information including events, people, and periods (Barton, 2005; NCSS, 2013; Bickford & O'Farrell, 2019; Morgan & Rasinski, 2012; von Heyking, 2004). Such sources, which support the information-gathering and research process, become evidence only when students put them into use. Thus, sources and evidence are not the same. Sources are materials that contain various data. Evidence is obtained from sources and used to support a claim or develop a hypothesis. In other words, the essential and necessary component for meaningful research or inquiry is evidence. Accordingly, it is necessary to provide students an understanding that sources alone cannot be accepted as evidence (Ashby, 2011; Donmez & Altikulac, 2014; NCSS, 2013; van Hover et al., 2016; Whitehouse, 2015).

Moreover, students should also be aware that all sources and evidence are not the same in terms of use and that their validity and reliability may differ. To provide students such a perspective, various historical sources, especially primary sources, and evidence should be used in teaching and learning environments, and students should be included in the historical research process (Barton, 2005; Donmez & Altikulac, 2014; Waring et al., 2015). It is important that students examine the sources and evidence they have accessed with a critical perspective and evaluate them through asking various questions. Such questions provide information about the type of data in that source, how it can be used as evidence, and the benefits it provides. Therefore, it can be said that the information presented by the evidence depends on the questions posed to it (Ashby, 2011; Barton, 2005; Fui, 2004; Morgan & Rasinski, 2012; NCSS, 2013; Sandwell, 2008).

Students should be introduced to particular issues regarding the use of historical evidence, such as the reliability of the evidence, the differences in historians' interpretations, and the absolute accuracy of primary and secondary sources. The use of historical evidence provides students with benefits like access to primary sources and evidence, conducting in-depth analysis, gaining experience, critical thinking, determining different perspectives, discussion, and active learning. Accordingly, with the opportunities that historical inquiry practice provides, students learn to examine various sources and evidence regarding the people, places, ideas, and developments that support the questioning, as well as to distinguish between what is important and what is not. Thus, students gain the skills of classifying evidence and interpreting different and contradictory historical narratives. They come to realize that the past is not built on a single source of truth and that there is no single source in history that is not questioned and criticized (Caunce, 1994; Kabapinar, 2019; Morgan & Rasinski, 2012; NCSS, 2013; von Heyking, 2004).

Despite these obvious benefits, Waring et al. (2015) point out that teachers do not encourage students to question the information they encounter, do not use historical sources, and do not have sufficient financial resources for educational materials. However, in addition to presenting information and managing the classroom, teachers should also play a vital role in enhancing high-order thinking skills and introducing students to more complex materials. Considering the teachers' approaches that affect students' learning, the importance of teaching how to criticize and evaluate sources is obvious (Bain, 2005; Bransford et al., 2005; Hicks et al., 2012; Monte-Sano, 2008).

Given the importance of the above-mentioned factors, within the scope of our study, prospective social studies teachers participated in the practices of using sources, evidence, and historical evidence and creating activities based on these before they started teaching. During the study implementation, they experienced criticizing and evaluating sources and evidence and using historical evidence. Accordingly, in the study, we aimed to determine the experiences and perceptions of prospective social studies teachers who collected and used various historical evidence and created activities based on this evidence. The study investigates the following questions:

1. What are the prospective teachers' criteria for evaluating the validity and reliability of historical evidence?
2. What are the changes in prospective teachers' perceptions of reliable historical evidence before and after implementation?
3. What are prospective teachers' opinions on the pedagogical benefits of using historical evidence?

Literature Review

A literature survey revealed that researchers had addressed topics such as the use of primary or secondary sources, historical thinking, using historical evidence, and teaching evidence-based history. Samples of these studies mostly consist of students, prospective teachers, and teachers. The studies' results show that the skills students gain and develop include historical thinking, critical thinking, complex thinking, evaluating resources, identifying biased or unbiased perspectives, understanding historical events, interpreting and evaluating sources, distinguishing between real and fake information, questioning and justifying, determining the reliability of

sources, extending historical empathy, and understanding historical significance (Ashby, 2010; Bain, 2005; Barton, 1997; Dogan & Kabapinar, 2010; Foster & Yeager, 1999; Kohlmeier, 2005; McCormick, 2004a; VanSledright & Afflerbach, 2005).

Besides the above-mentioned positive outcomes, Barton (1997) argues that students have difficulty in fully understanding the relationship between critical analysis and forming conclusions. Furthermore, Harris et al. (2016) found that students' historical reasoning skills are insufficient and that they need education in this regard. VanSledright & Afflerbach (2005) state that students' ability to create evidence-based arguments is insufficient. Another researcher, Kiris-Avarogullari (2020), points out that students can interpret historical sources based on their prior knowledge. However, they directly accept the accuracy and reliability of the information in such documents. She explained this finding with the fact that students who examine the sources are concerned about finding the correct answer for the activity.

Similarly, Scordino (2019) examined the use of online primary sources and observed both teachers and students. He states that while students could analyze primary sources under the guidance of a teacher, they did not consider different sources or perspectives while creating an understanding; they only tried reaching the correct answer during the analysis. Moreover, Cowgill II and Waring (2017) conducted a study analyzing students' and teachers' ability to analyze various sources, finding that both groups' analytical abilities were insufficient. The results of another study examining views of evidence-based teaching (Kabapinar & Yetis, 2019) revealed that students and teachers have a positive view of evidence-based teaching and that their views were similar. Similarly, Akbulut and Acikalin (2020) found that teachers had positive views of source-based social studies education and that students could grasp and analyze the sources.

In addition to the studies examining both students and teachers, there are also studies focusing on only teachers. These studies analyze the use of evidence—specifically, how sources and evidence are used in the classroom based on teachers' views (Fry, 1991; Monte-Sano, 2008). In such a study, van Hover et al. (2016) determined that most teachers did not use sources and evidence in the classroom.

In contrast to the above-mentioned studies, a study on prospective history teachers conducted by Kaya (2015) found that prospective teachers think that using primary sources in the classroom would be beneficial. Waring et al. (2015) asked prospective history and social studies teachers to prepare lesson plans and activities for certain subjects. Their results showed that 80% of the lesson plans were insufficient in terms of historical research and the evidence used. However, the study also showed that prospective teachers successfully integrated the sources into lesson plans.

Finally, McCormick (2004b) points out that prospective primary school teachers receive mostly textbook-based history education using didactic teaching approaches from the past. He determined that prospective teachers who have not previously used primary sources try to read and interpret the documents with their current knowledge, and therefore, they are confused when new information contradicts their prior beliefs. Prospective teachers who lack expertise in historical reading and thinking and who have no prior experience are likely to have difficulty in this area in the future. Therefore, it is important to introduce prospective teachers to methodologies and techniques allowing the use of sources and evidence in the classroom. This

study aims to examine how prospective teachers, as future guides in their classrooms, question, evaluate, and use sources and evidence, and accordingly, we have analyzed and interpreted these prospective teachers' experiences.

Method

The case study method allows researchers to examine multiple factors and events simultaneously in a specific space, which is why we used this method. The most important characteristic of this method is that events or situations to be examined are limited to specific spaces and times. A researcher should determine the boundaries of the event or situation that will be examined. Accordingly, our study was limited to one term and examination of the prospective social studies teachers' experiences of the use of evidence (Cohen et al., 2018; Merriam, 2018; Neuman, 2006). This limitation provided some benefits since it allowed us to make an in-depth examination of the case.

Participants

A total of 16 prospective social studies teachers (11 female, 5 male) studying at a state college in Turkey participated in our study. Participants were enrolled in a course called "Historical evidence, local history, and oral history in social studies teaching" in 2019. The course was one of the electives offered by the social studies education department. The course teaches teacher candidates how to use historical evidence in social studies teaching. They developed their evidence-based teaching activities using the Social Studies Teaching Curriculum as a basis from September 2019 to January 2020. At the end of the course, we used an evaluation rubric to grade the quality of the activities students developed. Instead of using real names, we coded the participants' names (e.g., Prospective Teacher 1 = PT1) under research ethics guidelines.

Research Procedure

Before the implementation, we informed the participants in detail about the activities. We first made some clarifications between evidence-based learning and the social studies curriculum. Second, we examined the Social Studies Teaching Curriculum together with students and extracted proper acquisitions that may use historical evidence. Last, we presented the implementation steps for them to follow. During the study period, the prospective social studies teachers followed the steps given in Figure 1 to create their activities using historical evidence.

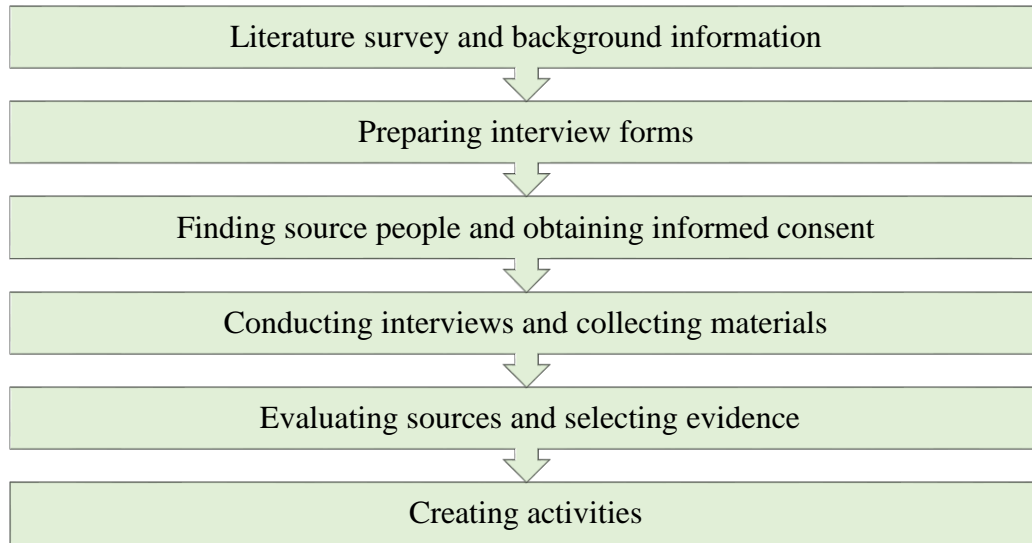


Figure 1. Activity creation process

Since this course was initiated as part of a new undergraduate curriculum published in 2018, the researchers themselves developed the activity creation process of the course. Moreover, every program determines its elective courses. Hence, Figure 1 does not represent all social studies teacher training programs in Turkey. Since the participants did not have enough experience with social science and history research methods, both researchers trained and guided students about evidence-based teaching during the implementation process. According to the activity creation process, participants established their groups and determined their research subjects. Researchers only gave some suggestions about the subjects. Table 1 displays the subjects determined by the groups.

Table 1. Subjects and number of group members

Subjects	Number of members
Memories of Korean veterans	3
History of the Koyunoğlu City Museum and Library	3
Games and toys played in Konya from past to present	3
Wedding traditions and customs of Konya	3
Teaching profession from past to present	2
Local history of Seydişehir	2

After the participants established their groups and determined their research topics, they conducted a literature survey and gained background information on the research topics. Then, using this information, they prepared questions for an oral history interview and found source people from whom to get information. The participants conducted oral history interviews in the next step, and before each interview, they obtained informed consent (Jenner, 2013) to use the records for educational purposes. In addition to these interviews, the participants collected at least 15 pieces of evidence and created activities for the social studies course using their historical evidence and materials.

Data Collection Tools

We used a combination of data sources by employing the data triangulation method (Patton, 2015), and first, we discussed the created activities. Next, we conducted focus group interviews with the participants since they carried out group work and produced a group product. We used our semi-structured interview forms in these interviews. The focus group meeting's objective was to get detailed opinions and information from the participants. Moreover, the participants were expected to provide detailed reviews of the activities they created or source people they interviewed by discussing their opinions and giving feedback to each other (Bader & Rossi, 2002; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010). We managed the discussions as moderators to achieve these goals. Then, we asked participants to write down their research stories. In addition to these, we kept unstructured observation notes during the study period.

Data Analysis

We evaluated data collected through a systematic and detailed process from different sources with a case study approach using content analysis. We read all the focus group interview transcripts, research stories, observation notes, and assignment texts of participants, and based on these readings, we took notes, coding and categorizing them. In the analysis stage, we discussed the predetermined and newly acquired themes together. Then, we evaluated the participants' perceptions and experiences of the situations examined (Cohen et al., 2018; Harwood & Garry, 2003). We also used the letter “*f*” to show the frequency of the participants' views and direct quotations to prove our interpretations.

Validity and Reliability

We used the data triangulation method to increase the reliability of our data (Patton, 2015). First, we obtained audio recordings of all interviews, and these recordings were fully transcribed without making any changes. Then, we sent recordings and their transcriptions to the participants and obtained their approval (Maxwell, 2018; Merriam, 2018; Silverman, 2018). Next, we selected direct quotations from the transcripts, which the participants reviewed and finalized, and used them to support the findings. Last, we finalized and revised our study after having it reviewed by two field experts. We tried to increase the validity and reliability of our study as much as possible through these practices. Furthermore, we obtained ethics committee approval before conducting the research.

Findings

We present the findings obtained from the analysis of the data below, organized under subheadings according to research headings.

Prospective teachers' criteria for the validity and reliability of historical evidence

First, we examined participants' criteria for judging the validity and reliability of historical evidence. At this point, we asked the prospective teachers to explain and justify what

qualifications historical evidence should have to consider it valid and reliable. Table 2 presents participants' stated criteria for the validity and reliability of evidence.

Table 2. Criteria for the validity and reliability of historical evidence

Criteria	<i>f</i>
Primary source	4
One-to-one observability	3
Consistency with different sources	3
Factual information	3
Tangibility	3
Testify	2
Reflecting different perspectives	1
Visuality	1
Impartiality	1
Official source	1

As shown in Table 2, being a “primary source” was the participants' most frequently stated criterion for the validity and reliability of historical evidence. A prospective teacher, PT1, explained this choice by giving this example:

For instance, there is a work titled Makalat-ı Seyit Harun Veli. We used this work written in that period. There is a person [named] Şeyh Bedrettin, brother of Şeyh Seyit Harun. I think that it is a primary source because it was written by that person.

As this example shows, participants qualified a source they used as a primary and reliable source if it belonged to the period being studied and was written by a witness of the events. Another prospective teacher, PT16, explained his perception regarding a source of factual information, saying,

In my opinion, it should contain objective data. It has to be accepted by everyone and I have to see it. So, I have to get that information, I have to see it, and I have to check myself to see if it is really true.

As this statement demonstrates, the factual nature of the prospective teacher's assessment and conclusions directly affected his perspective on the validity and reliability of the evidence. Finally, PT 2 attached importance to the fact that information provided by historical evidence should be consistent and compatible with many sources. In addition to these, the participants specified other factors, such as reflecting different perspectives, visuality, impartiality, and being an official source, as criteria for the validity and reliability of historical evidence.

Changes in prospective teachers' criteria for reliable historical evidence

Regarding the second research question, we examined the evidence that participants considered true and reliable before and after the implementation. Table 3 presents the changes in the prospective teachers' perspectives.

Table 3. Changes in prospective teachers' criteria for reliable historical evidence

Participant	Before implementation	After implementation
PT1	Internet sources	Official websites
PT2	Photos	Primary sources
PT3	Scientific studies	Scientific studies and witnesses
PT4	Internet sources	Official documents (belonging to that period) and witnesses
PT5	Internet sources	Official documents (belonging to that period) and witnesses
PT6	Books	Primary sources
PT7	Books	Primary sources
PT8	Written sources	Real objects
PT9	News programs and print media	Real objects and print media
PT10	Written sources	Oral, visual, and written resources
PT11	Internet sources	Books
PT12	Internet sources	Primary sources
PT13	Internet sources	Scientific studies
PT14	Internet sources	Scientific studies
PT15	Internet sources	Scientific studies
PT16	Scientific studies	Scientific studies and witnesses

As Table 3 shows, before the implementation, the most reliable source for prospective teachers was “internet sources.” Next were “books” and “scientific studies.” By contrast, after the implementation, the most reliable sources for participants were “primary sources,” followed by “scientific studies” and documents belonging to the period. PT12, who had a significant change in beliefs, explained his method for researching implementation by saying, “Is there research done for us before this course? Just Google it. That is, without using anything else, just use that results. For example, we find some information on the first page we opened, just copy-paste it.” PT12 also mentioned having plagiarized in previous tasks but highlighted the change in his perception of reliable historical evidence after the implementation by saying, “Primary sources are important for me now.” Similarly, PT1 admitted to using internet sources unquestioningly before the implementation, saying, “I used to believe that [all the] information on the internet is true; however, after learning Google Scholar and DergiPark [a national scientific studies platform], I noticed that this information is invalid and contains errors.” Both participants’ perceptions regarding the reliability of internet sources changed after they faced different source types and experienced the use of such sources.

Books were participants’ second most reliable source before the implementation. PT7, one supporter of this view, explained that the reason for considering books a reliable source was related to the person or institution that published the books, saying, “I was thinking of books published by the Ministry of Education or books written by a person alone... So, I was thinking that this person should know something as he writes.” PT7 and others in the same group pointed out that they accepted the books they used during their education as correct without questioning them. After the implementation, PT7 demonstrated a change of perspective, now considering works belonging to the time more reliable evidence:

For example, the edicts are written by the statesmen themselves... For an agreement that was made between the Ottoman Empire and the UK, there could not be a distorted version of the edict in the Ottoman archives, this document cannot be distorted. Whatever is written is the same in the UK archives.

This example demonstrates how the prospective teacher considered official documents belonging to the time more reliable since they allow for comparison. In contrast with the pre-implementation findings, after the implementation, some participants thought that the information they obtained from witnesses was at least as accurate and reliable as primary sources. PT6, one of these participants, said, “In my opinion, the audio and video recordings we performed [oral history interviews] are more reliable. Because we did not get it from somewhere else, we recorded these audio recordings ourselves. I think it is more reliable than others.” This participant considered that evidence more reliable since it was obtained from the interviews that the participant personally conducted. Similarly, PT10 clarified the complementary nature of the evidence by saying, “Well, of course, there are written sources, however... Now, oral and visual evidence are also added to my beliefs. That is, both of them complement each other.”

Finally, as Table 3 shows, four participants who did not name “primary sources” among the types of evidence they considered true and reliable before the implementation mentioned this source type after the implementation. Our findings indicate that important changes occurred in these prospective teachers’ perceptions of reliable historical evidence.

The pedagogical benefits of using historical evidence

Finally, we examined the participants’ opinions on the pedagogical benefits of using historical evidence that they learned during the implementation. Table 4 presents these findings.

Table 4. The pedagogical benefits of using historical evidence

Benefits	<i>f</i>
Learning without memorization	4
Providing a critical perspective	2
Facilitating permanent learning	2
Being practical	2
Developing high-level skills	2
Research-based	1
Providing in-depth learning	1
Enabling real-life experience	1
Establishing cause-effect relationships	1

Table 4 shows that the participants highlighted the “learning without memorization” benefit of using historical evidence since it is an applied practice. One participant, PT10, highlighted the importance of students’ active participation by saying, “By using evidence in learning...that is, instead of a shallow and rote learning approach, it is a method that allows practicing.” Similarly, PT4 said, “Since it is distant from a rote learning approach, one should not forget them in a minute after learning. So, it provides permanent learning.”

As these statements demonstrate, although they may not have directly expressed it, the participants touched on the conformity of using historical evidence with the constructivist learning approach. Another participant, PT15, explained the benefits of using historical evidence: “It encourages students to research, to think more analytically... Besides, ...students engage in something.” Moreover, PT14 described other skills gained using historical evidence, saying, “It allows to establish cause-effect relationships between events and also a more critical view of events.”

PT11 experienced using historical evidence for the first time in this study and summarized the effects of this process on himself and his life:

Well, I exaggerated it so much that when something happens in the home, for example, I say that “show me a piece of evidence.” The situation going further like this... That is, I expect something that satisfies me. I want it to show me its accuracy.

In addition to statements like these, participants pointed out that the use of historical evidence provides in-depth learning and real-life experience as well as helping develop high-level skills.

Discussion

In this study, we aimed to determine the perceptions and experiences of prospective social studies teachers who created activities using historical evidence. Accordingly, we tried introducing prospective teachers to primary sources and evidence, enabling them to conduct in-depth analyses and evaluations and to determine different perspectives (Morgan & Rasinski, 2012). Thus, we offered students an experience beyond the traditional approach of unquestioningly accepting information and neglecting historical sources (van Hover et al., 2016; Waring et al., 2015). The most important reason for us to apply such an approach was to provide these prospective teachers with complex thinking, critical thinking, and historical literacy skills.

For this purpose, for the first research question, we examined the participants’ criteria for judging the validity and reliability of historical evidence. The results we obtained demonstrate that the participants’ most emphasized criterion was being a primary source. That is, according to these prospective teachers, finding and using primary sources provides more reliable results. Regarding the second research question, we examined which evidence participants qualified as reliable and valid before and after the implementation. The results show that while participants considered internet sources the most reliable before the implementation, they named primary sources as reliable after the implementation. Barton (2005), who argues that the superior reliability of primary sources over secondary sources is a common myth, highlights that instead of relying on the sources directly, it is necessary to evaluate the reliability of each source and piece of evidence separately. Moreover, unlike our findings, Harris et al. (2016) determined that students rely on secondary sources rather than primary sources. This difference in students’ views can be explained by whether they have sufficient knowledge of researching, questioning, and criticizing historical sources. A further explanation for this result may be in that these prospective teachers had relied on internet sources before the implementation, they had received a didactic history education at both the K-12 and undergraduate levels, they had stuck to textbooks, and they had not used historical sources sufficiently (Bain, 2005; Donmez & Altikulac, 2014; Harris et al., 2016; Kaya, 2015; Kohlmeier, 2005; McCormick, 2004b).

This problem is more common in classrooms that only use textbooks and apply a traditional teaching approach. Students who evaluate historical sources in such a classroom environment tend to find and write down the correct answer while answering activities or questions. Acting with this concern, students regard every piece of information they encounter as true without questioning and do not consider different perspectives. However, the purpose of evidence-based history education is to develop students' thinking skills (Kiris-Avarogullari, 2020; Scordino, 2019). Our findings indicate the importance for students, prospective teachers, and teachers of learning to use historical evidence.

Regarding the final research question, we examined the prospective teachers' opinions on the pedagogical benefits of using historical evidence. According to the participants' opinions, various benefits emerged, such as learning without memorization, in-depth and permanent learning, developing high-level thinking skills, and facilitating the ability to establish cause-effect relationships. Similar to these findings, Kabapinar and Yetis (2019) found that evidence-based history education helps students love history, makes students active, and provides permanent learning.

Many researchers have pointed out that teachers should gain knowledge and skills about the use of primary sources and historical inquiry and should be familiar with employing different strategies. Thus, teachers can help students improve their ability to use and analyze evidence, especially critical thinking skills (Cowgill II & Waring, 2017; VanSledright & Afflerbach, 2005). In our study, we determined that prospective teachers who experienced the use of historical evidence understood the importance of using sources and evidence in education environments, understood the interpretive nature of history through their experiences, began thinking critically about sources and evidence, created and interpreted new information based on their prior learning, and finally, displayed empathic behaviors and higher motivation (Akbulut & Acikalin, 2020; Foster & Yeager, 1999; Kaya, 2015; Kohlmeier, 2005).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Our study examining the perceptions and experiences of prospective teachers who created various activities using historical evidence allowed us to make several inferences. First, participants gained experience using, evaluating, and questioning sources and evidence as well as presenting them in the classroom. These experiences indicate that these prospective teachers will be able to guide their students in developing various skills as experts in this regard. These results are the powerful outcomes of our study. The main limitation of our study is that our sample consisted of only prospective social studies teachers. Another limitation is that the activities participants created were not used in education practices, and therefore, their results were not evaluated. At the beginning of the implementation, we intended that the participants would use their activities in real classroom conditions, but both the situations of secondary schools and the COVID-19 outbreak did not allow for this. We will address these limitations in our further studies. In this study, we closely observed the value of using historical evidence for helping students recognize the evidence and understand it correctly. Based on these observations, we suggest that the use of evidence should be part of lessons from the first years of education.

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