



Effectiveness of History Teaching Based on Social Constructivist Learning and Development of Historical Thinking Skills

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Abstract

Together with the changes experienced in the field of education around the world, it is expected that the global focus will shift from teacher-centred education to student-centred education; furthermore, attention will be paid to the needs of students to ensure that they are implementing their learning in practice throughout the entire education process. In this context, as a student-centred theory, social constructivist theory is prominent as it is essentially based on cooperative learning and displays the importance of a student's peers in the realisation of learning. As it is compatible with the multi-cultural and multi-perspective structure of history education, considering the needs of students and history education and their daily life acquisitions, the target of developing historical thinking abilities has become more important in their academic development within social constructivist theory. In terms of the development of the historical thinking abilities of students, in addition to active learning that will attract their attention, activities must be developed that are centred on different learning methods and strategies. This research aims to show how these types of activities can be performed in the context of history education and how this can transform students' historical thinking abilities. The research includes the education delivered by researchers in the 2016-2017 fall and spring semesters for a period of 14 weeks with 11 students on activities related to Cyprus history as well as a comparison of the pre-test and post-test results of a historical thinking skill scale that was developed by the researchers. The historical thinking skill scale developed by the researchers was used in the process of collecting the quantitative data and a semi-structured interview form was used in collecting qualitative data. At the end of the pre-test and post-test, the results were examined to determine if there were any significant differences. Additionally, based on the opinions provided by the students, it was seen that the activities had a positive impact on their historical thinking skills and the requirement for such activities in Cyprus history classes was demonstrated.

Keywords

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Social Constructivist Theory
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Introduction

According to Demircioğlu (2014), history teaching, or in more constructivist terms, history learning, is a type of learning and teaching based on pedagogical foundations performed within the studies displayed by historians at formal education centres such as schools under the guidance of history teachers with the principal objective of acquiring historical knowledge and skills. The purposes of history teaching can vary according to time, countries, societies, states and even government policies. Today, the basic purposes of history teaching and learning can be listed as follows: ensuring that students assume responsibility in the protection of common heritage while covering cultural heritage, thus making a contribution to values education (Demircioğlu & Tokdemir, 2008; İnanç & Liew, 2017; Tosh, 2015; Ministry of National Education [MNE], 2018; Yıldırım, 2017); equipping people with the love of their motherland within citizenship education and raising awareness on the requirements of being a good citizen (Demircioğlu, 2014; Harris, 2017; Kaya, 2009; MNE, 2018); in addition to learning and defining one's own culture first, ensuring that they define the structures of other cultures and societies and teach tolerance, respect and empathy towards these structures (Demircioğlu, 2014; Lévesque & Clark, 2018; Yılmaz, 2008), helping individuals see the relations between historical events, while developing their chronological ordering knowledge (Aktekin, 2009a; Dere & Kızılay, 2017; Güven, 2014); in addition to understanding that although history is different than the present,, teaching that history is actually a process of making a bridge between the past, the present and the future using historical interpretation ability (Haydn, Stephen, Arthur, & Hunt, 2015; Yazar & Yazar, 2018); teaching how developed historical skills developed can also be used in problems encountered outside school (Demircioğlu, 2014; Kaya, 2009; Merkt, Werner, & Wagner, 2017; Yılmaz, 2008); and ensuring that individuals who can think critically, question and research are raised (Candan & Koçer, 2013; Demircioğlu, 2014; Kaya, 2009).

The above-mentioned objectives of history teaching are acquisitions that are expected to be realised; however, most of them cannot be realised due to a variety of reasons. In this context, it is necessary that the reasons behind the non-realisation of these objectives are evaluated and solutions are produced for the emerging problems. The problems in history teaching can be examined in two dimensions. First, the problems experienced concerning the content of history subjects; second, the problems related to the teaching methods, strategies, techniques and materials of history teaching. When the content of history teaching is examined, the partisanship of content comes to the forefront in particular (Aktekin, 2009b; Makriyianni, Psaltis, & Latif, 2011; Pamuk, 2014; Samani & Tarhan, 2017). With its partisanship problems, historical content stands out with such aspects as emphasizing the history of the nation, government policies leading to the contents being organised according to their tendencies and distorting history in order to create the desired identity among students. Şimşek and Alaslan (2014) claimed that the usage of history in the formation of national identity and the development of the view towards the "other" dates back to the French Revolution, which led to the popularisation of nationalism and the emphasis that it is an essential tool for history in spreading national identity firstly in Europe and then around the world. Thus, both history writing and history teaching began to be used in the formation of national identity and how people perceive "others". Moon (2015) gave the example of Italy and questioned the national identity that was formed as a result of the nationalist viewpoint conveyed to children through history lessons in the creation of fascist Italy. Such a negative situation leads to partisan content in history teaching. Pamuk (2014) began with the connection between culture, sub-culture and the content of history teaching and emphasised that historical content that is written in a partisan manner will bring to the fore cultures of certain classes, which means that sub-cultures are assimilated. This shows that partisan historical content is a disadvantage for multiculturalism.

When the problems displayed in the teaching-learning environment dimensions of history education are taken into consideration, theoretical problems come to the fore in particular. The contributions of constructivist, social constructivist and post-modernist theories should be included in learning-teaching dimensions; however, it is observed today that behaviourist theory which is at the core of teaching preserves its former place. In addition to the centrality of teaching, the maintenance of rote learning and history teaching that is far from critical thinking, problem-based learning, project-based learning and similar approaches are in question today. As a result of the foregoing, there are problems in the applicability of history teaching curricula, part of which has been amended and efforts are ongoing to revise the remaining parts (Şimşek & Alaslan, 2014).

Considering the history teaching curricula in Turkey and Northern Cyprus, it can be seen that there are similar problems. According to Demircioğlu (2014), history teaching curricula are not adequate despite the fact that they are prepared according to constructivist theory; students the knowledge they acquire in history classes in their daily lives, and skills like researching, analysis and synthesis cannot be developed in line with historical thinking abilities. Ata (2007) supported these opinions and attributed the low level of motivation in individuals concerning history classes with the fact that they associate history with rote learning. Students only memorise historical events and phenomena instead of analysing and synthesising them; therefore, the expected learning cannot be achieved (Yeşil, 2010). Students relate the boring nature of history learning to the fact that it is based on rote learning and they claim that more enjoyable history learning can be realised by conducting research (Aktekin, 2009a). In addition to the mentioned problems, as is the case in other fields of teaching, it is observed that in history teaching, course books are used instead of the teaching curricula that are expected to be used. In other words, books are seen as exclusive, they are not questioned, and learning by doing other research is not supported, as a result of which students believe that the books are the only source of history information and therefore prefer to memorize the content (Akbaba, 2014; Aktekin & Pala, 2013; Güneyli & Özkul, 2013).

Similar to Turkey and other countries around the world, there are problems related with history teaching and learning in Northern Cyprus in terms of content and method. Few studies have been conducted in Northern Cyprus in regard to the problems in history education, but there are several studies on the problems of history books. The most important reason for the foregoing is that until 2016, there was no history education programme in Northern Cyprus in the professional sense; consequently, book-based education understanding was adopted and this is considered to be one of the most serious problems (TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture, 2016a, p. 7). An examination of the literature reveals that the problems in regard to Cyprus history teaching applied in Northern Cyprus are that history teaching is far from being impartial, that history course books are changing parallel to changes in the government, that books are far from being multicultural and are full of references emphasising the “other”, that too much emphasis is made on political and military history whereas socio-cultural history is not covered sufficiently, that the life stories of heroes and a certain class are emphasised and there is no information on the people in other classes of the society, and that the history of women and children is almost non-existent (Makriyianni et al., 2011; Samani & Tarhan, 2017; Şivgin, 2009; Vural & Özuyanık, 2008).

The most frequently emphasised problem in studies on Cyprus history teaching in Northern and Southern Cyprus is the changes in Cyprus history course books parallel to the changes of government. This problem, as mentioned above, has led to a lack of objectivity in the course books in both Southern and Northern Cyprus due to the respective governmental policies (Latif & Karahasan, 2010) and the formation of the concept of the “other” in the minds of students when national identity is being created. In support of the findings of Latif and Karahasan, Hadjipavlou (2017) also claimed that the teaching curricula and methods applied in history books in Cyprus lead to the formation of a

problematic (far from tolerant) national identity. Köstüklü (2013) examined the concept of Turkishness in history books used by Greek Cypriots and found out that Greek Cypriots also defined the "other" in an effort to create their national identity. Hálfdanarson and Kızılyürek (2010) examined the cases of Iceland and Cyprus and displayed similar opinions emphasising that both Cypriot Greeks and Turks analysed history in a one-sided manner and wrote partisan histories. Makriyianni and Psaltis (2007) examined the roots of this problem in the British era and claimed that in order to prevent nationalism ideology, the administration banned Turkish and Greek history education and that only British history was included in the educational curricula. As a result, it is inevitable that both Cypriot Turks and Cypriot Greeks who experienced this period performed their history writing in a one-sided manner. In addition to these example studies, there are other researches that have reached similar findings in terms of national identity (for other studies see Güneyli & Özkul, 2013; Koruroğlu & Başkan, 2013; Murat, 2012; Persianis, 2017; Tamçelik, 2009).

Studies which displayed the problems of history education in Turkey and Northern Cyprus are mentioned above. In this context, general problems and specific problems can be mentioned on the basis of history education. General problems are classified in two groups, namely content problems related to history and problems of history teaching methods. In regard to the specific problems, rapid changes in history education parallel to the changing government policies can be mentioned among the problems of history education in Northern Cyprus as well as the education based on books due to the lack of a professional history education curricula until 2016. Considering the mentioned problems, the importance of this study becomes clear. As such, this study is based on historical thinking abilities which are aimed at solving problems related to both the content and teaching methods of history education; it also stands on social constructivism theory which offers solutions to the teacher-based teaching based on behaviourist theory, which is one of the most important problems of teaching, as well as the negligence of multiculturalism, which is a content problem. In addition, the study also aims to display an alternative teaching design in the efforts to fill the gaps in history education curriculum in Northern Cyprus and to present different teaching methods, strategies and materials to teachers.

Considering the problems of history education in Turkey and Cyprus and to the proposed solutions to these problems, it is believed that briefly explaining the historical thinking skills as well as their importance will be enlightening, which determines the necessity of this study. In brief, historical thinking skills include analysing and making inferences from history within the framework of logic based on historical events and phenomena as well as logic and reasoning, and the aim is to equip students with these skills after they have completed their history education. In addition, students will be able to comprehend the importance of examining historical records in a similar manner to historians. Historical thinking abilities are grouped under five main titles in the literature: chronological ordering/thinking, historical understanding, historical analysis, historical research and synthesis and finally, historical evaluation (Demircioğlu, 2014, p. 36; Güven, 2014, p. 80; Martinko, 2017, p. 19). In addition to these five main titles, in the "field-specific competencies and skills" section of the new history education curriculum prepared in 2018 by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, establishing cause and effect relationships, perceiving change and continuity, and historical empathy are also included (MNE, 2018). Another critical topic is the manner with which historical thinking skills should be learned and taught. In his study, Beyer (2008) examined the teaching of historical thinking skills and emphasised that there should be some stages in the acquisition of these skills. These stages are the clarification and teaching of thinking skills and necessary information, followed by the creation of the content of the course focusing on the development of each skill and finally, providing guidance and support for the improvement of these skills. Considering these stages, it becomes clear that a well-designed teaching design is needed so that historical thinking skills can be identified, properly executed and evaluated.

Secondly, discussion is needed on the type of solution that social constructivist theory can offer for these problems. According to Pushkin and Colon-Gonzalez (1998), social constructivism is a theory developed by thinkers such as Vygotsky, Bruner and Bandura, which emphasises that learning is not an individual phenomenon; on the contrary, it is a social phenomenon and the interaction between individuals is possible and constant. Individuals obtain their present knowledge from the perspective of their past experiences, communities and cultures. Taking this fact into consideration, it is not possible to isolate the learning experienced by an individual from the society or the culture (Buraphadeja & Dawson, 2008). During their learning, people share with each other experiences and knowledge that they have accumulated from their society and culture (Powell & Kalina, 2009). In addition, Adams (2007) focused on another important topic and emphasised that in order for an individual to accept such information, it is essential that it is internalised by a social group with which he/she is familiar. Based on the foregoing, it is believed that a social individual can share the information that he/she obtains from his/her society, community and culture with other people in his/her environment and open the door to multiculturalism, as a result of which he/she can avoid objectivity.

According to Sherman and Kurshan (2005), as the first aspect of education, social constructivist theory equips students with the ability to interact with their peers in the process of acquiring new knowledge so that students can transfer to each other their different cultural and social backgrounds. In addition, social constructivist thinkers believe that the multicultural nature of formal education centres has to be taken into consideration (McCaslin & Hickey, 2001), which is one of the foundations of current history teaching. In that way, it will be possible to add a multicultural and multi-perspective structure to history teaching. Stradling (2003) emphasised that history educators are people with different backgrounds and cultures in a formal education centre, who realise learning in interaction with each other and who should develop an understanding that each individual can have different perspectives on historical events, phenomena and persons and that history educators should guide the learners in that direction. In summary, this study seeks an answer to the question “what is the effectiveness of history teaching aimed at improving the historical thinking skills of students based on social constructivist theory?” In this respect, the sub-problems of the study are presented below:

1. According to social constructivist theory, is there any significant difference between the scale scores of learners in the study group before and after the experimental application on historical thinking skills depending on the application of history teaching activities based on social constructivist theory?

2. In regard to the scale developed in the study, is there any significant difference between the historical thinking skill scale scores of learners in the following sub-dimensions before and after the experimental application?

- i. Chronological ordering and thinking/periodisation
- ii. Historical problem analysis,
- iii. Historical literacy skills,
- iv. Skills of reaching and using historical resources (usage of resources),
- v. Skills of synthesising history,
- vi. Skills of developing historical cause and effect relationships

3. What are the views of students in regard to the activities in the application process of history teaching aimed at the development of historical thinking skills based on social constructivist theory.

Method

Model of the Research

This study uses a mixed method research design, as it consists of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Taking into consideration that the mixed research method has inherent diversity, the study coincides with the embedded design, which is a mixed research pattern proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007). In the embedded design, either the qualitative or quantitative method is used more in comparison to the other. In this study, the quantitative method is the dominant method (experimental study) and the qualitative method (conducting interviews) is used in support; thus, it can be said that an embedded research design is used. In the quantitative element of the research, a single group pre-test / post-test model was employed, which is a semi-experimental design. The case study, which is a research method that coincides with the qualitative research part of the study, is conducted in the natural environment of the sample and is aimed at reaching a holistic conclusion regarding the subject of the research.

Study Group

For the study group, secondary school students who were suitable for “purposive and convenience case sampling” were chosen. In this context, history club students from the Turkish Education Association (TED) School in Northern Cyprus where one of the researchers was employed constituted the sample of the research. This group was specifically chosen as the experimental group because the researcher was employed at this institution. Thus, this group was chosen in order to add speed, economy and practicality to the research. The group was comprised of secondary school students who were members of the mentioned history club and consisted of a total of 11 students. Of these 11 students, four were girls and seven were boys, two students were aged 11, five students were aged 12 and four students were aged 13.

Experimental Research Process and the Role of Researcher

The experimental application process of the study is based on the Morrison, Ross and Kemp Model. This is a non-linear model that is regarded as a flexible model, which allows the researcher the flexibility to start the process from any stage they choose (Baturay, 2008). The model is designed as a circle, contrary to other teaching models (Richey, 2005). The model consists of nine main stages: teaching targets, learner characteristics, task analysis, organization of content, teaching strategies, message design, teaching design, and evaluation tools. Additionally, there are stages including result evaluation, formative evaluation, supportive evaluation and revision stages as well as planning, application, project management and supporting services. A short description of these stages will explain that the first stage to be implemented is the teaching problems stage, or the step in which problems are defined. In terms of the learner characteristics stage, it includes the process of defining the attributes of the learning group and the acquisition of knowledge about this group. The task analysis stage is aimed at deciding on the necessary information and procedures to assist the learning individual to comprehend the overall purposes. In the teaching targets stage, the designer clearly determines where the learner will specialise or concentrate their efforts. Another step, the organization of content, includes the organization of the information in a rational order so that the learner can benefit accordingly. The aim of teaching strategies is to ensure that the learner combines his/her new information and former information through the creativity of the designer. After the strategy is decided, this is followed by the message design stage, which focuses on the design of words and photographs to be chosen. The next stage is the design of teaching, which involves the preparation of teaching materials. The last stage is defined as evaluation tools, which includes describing the tools developed for determining whether the learner has reached the established goals (Morrison, Ross, Kemp, & Kalman, 2011). The main reason for choosing this model in the experimental application process is that it begins with problems, stages are understandable and organized so that the designer feels comfortable, it focuses on the preparedness and attributes of the learning individual and is based on process evaluation, which means that it has the flexibility to be revised during the process.

Based on social constructivist theory and the Morrison, Ross and Kemp teaching design model, a 14-week program involving history education activities was created by the researcher within this design, which was specifically aimed at historical thinking skills as well as the cooperative learning abilities of the students. The developed activities are parallel to the acquisitions in the history of Cyprus curricula that is being used in TED Northern Cyprus College. which was prepared in 2016. For example, cooperative working, which is shown as one of the basic objectives in the activities, is emphasised as one of the basic objectives of the curriculum published by the TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture in 2016 (TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture, 2016b). In addition, being able to perceive history through critical eyes, establishing empathy, improvement of historical literacy and awareness for historical works and protecting the artefacts are among the common objectives. The dates of these activities, their names, purposes and the activity process are given in the table below.

Table 1. Activities

Date	Name of Activity	Purpose	Process
12.10.2016	History club rights and needs	*Learning expectations from the history club *Encouraging the feeling of cooperation and group collaboration	*Having students write a list of needs and rights
19.10.2016	Sightseeing my neighbourhood	*Providing information about the history of the neighbourhood	*Observing the Arap Ahmet neighbourhood in Nicosia (as it consists of artefacts from different cultures) * Map usage and answering study questions
26.10.2016	Foreign words in our language	*Obtaining information on the diversity of languages in Cyprus	* In the form of group work, finding the proverbs and idioms including foreign words
03.11.2016	HASDER Trip – Handicrafts	*Making inferences about the socio-economic history of certain historical periods	*Person in charge giving information on HASDER * Answering study questions
09.11.2016	Society in the British era	*Observing multiculturalism in the British era of Cyprus * Development of historical empathy	*Interpretation of photographs portraying the British era in Cyprus. *Choosing a person in the picture and showing empathy, other students guessing the era
16.11.2016	Proposing solutions	*Displaying problem suggestions to the Cyprus problem *Becoming knowledgeable about similar problems in the world and learning about the solution proposals of other world leaders	* Performing a general brainstorming session on the Cyprus problem *Watching videos about important global leaders * Group discussion on solutions to the problem
30.11.2016	Non-Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus	* Learning the attitude of the Ottoman administration towards non-Muslims in Cyprus	*Reading and interpreting the texts about non-Muslims, which are first-hand sources

Table 1. Continued

Date	Name of Activity	Purpose	Process
07.12.2016	Wedding ceremonies and traditions	*Raising awareness about the social change and the role of women in Cypriot society	* Looking at photographs and videos of weddings in Cypriot society * Question and answer activity related to the photographs and videos
14.12.2016	The definition of a refugee	*Understanding the concept of a refugee * Discovering the universal problems that refugees experience	* Showing photos and videos about refugees *Brainstorming about the refugee problem *Discussion on the problems experienced by refugees
21.12.2016	Historical artefacts game	*Learning about the general features of historical artefacts in Cyprus, where they are found, under which empire they were built, their purpose of use and how they affected socio-economic history	* Teaching the materials in the form of a game, which is distributed as a group work
04.01.2017 11.01.2017	Historical movie (shadows and images)	*Developing social-emotional skills and life-long learning skills of students *Equipping the students with life experiences based on historical events	* Presentation of a film *Pausing the film and making guesses * Question-answer and discussion about the movie
08.03.2017	History in the library	*Learning how to use a library with particular focus on gaining access to historical sources	*Visiting the Grand Library of Near East University *Presentation by the library administrator *Finding historical sources in the library through group work
15.03.2017	Cyprus archaeology seminar	*Obtaining knowledge about the archaeological artefacts and studies in Cyprus *Connecting the science of archaeology with the science of history	*Inviting the person in charge of the Old Artefacts Office Archaeology department to the school to meet with the students *Conducting an archaeology seminar in the class * Encouraging the students to ask questions to the person in charge
22.03.2017	Leaders who reigned in Cyprus	*Learning about the leaders who reigned in Cyprus *Exploring the relation of cultural diversity in Cyprus with history	*Writing small scenarios about the leaders in Cyprus *Displaying the scenarios written by students using the drama method

Data Collection Tools and Collection of Data

A measuring device was developed by the researchers for the purpose of collecting the quantitative data of the study. This scale is related to historical thinking skills. While developing the historical thinking skills scale, one group of students separate from the experimental group was asked to prepare an essay on the specific historical thinking skills they would like to have. Subsequently, a literature search was conducted (Akıncı Güngör, 2011; Bayramoğlu, 2016; Erdoğan, 2007; Işık, 2008; Kızılay, 2014; Şahin, 2014; Talin, 2015; Viator, 2012; Waring & Robinson, 2015) and scales related to history education were examined (Akbaba & Kılcan, 2012; Aktaş & Safran, 2013; Tuna & Safran, 2017; Hooper, Stockton, Krupnick, & Green, 2011; Ulusoy, 2009a). After all these stages were completed, a draft scale was prepared on historical thinking skills and three experts from the field were consulted to ensure its validity.

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted first for the 43 prepared questions in order to measure the historical thinking skills. The survey was administered to the required number of students based on convenience sampling so that the reliability and validity analysis of the historical thinking skills scale could be performed. The equation developed here was based on schools in Nicosia and attention was paid to ensure that one of the schools was a private school and the other was a public school. According to the education statistics published by Northern Cyprus MEB, there were 5,542 students in total in the 2015-2016 academic year, 2,888 of whom were 7th grade and 2,654 of whom were 8th grade. The sample size with a 95% reliability and 5% sampling error from this universe would consist of 359 students; therefore, the scale was completed by 360 students so that reliability and validity analyses of the scale could be made.

Principal components analysis was performed using the varimax method, which is an orthogonal rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) results show that the sample size is adequate for such an analysis. The KMO result of 0.87 result obtained in this analysis is a "perfect" value according to Field (2009). The Bartlett's sphericity test results ($\chi^2 (953) = 3957,265, p < 0,001$) show that the correlation between factors is sufficiently suitable for principal components analysis. In order to obtain eigenvalues for each component in the dataset, analysis was firstly conducted. According to the Kaiser criterion (1), six of the components returned values that exceeded the criterion limit. These components explain 56.75% of the variance. According to the factors collected in the same components, the first component is the historical resource usage component, the second is the historical synthesising component, the third one is the historical problem analysis component, the fourth is the historical periodization component, the fifth is the historical literacy component and the sixth is the historical cause-and-effect.

According to the reliability analysis results conducted to measure the measurement consistency, meaning the consistency of the questions of these six suggested components, the reliability score of the first component of historical resource usage is Cronbach $\alpha=0.762$, whereas the reliability score of the synthesising component is Cronbach $\alpha=0.730$. The reliability score of the historical problem analysis component is Cronbach $\alpha=0.702$, whereas the reliability score of the periodization component is Cronbach $\alpha=0.709$. As the reliability scores of all these components are above the practical value, which is Cronbach $\alpha=0.7$, it could be stated that they have high reliability. The reliability score of the final two components, which are the historical literacy and historical cause-and-effect components, are Cronbach $\alpha=0.665$ and Cronbach $\alpha=0.649$ respectively. These values are at acceptable levels, as they are very close to the threshold value.

The six components obtained from the exploratory factor analysis, which was conducted with the purpose of exploring the number of components around which the 43 items developed for the historical thinking scale were based, were also subjected to confirmatory factor analysis calculated by AMOS 18. Regression coefficients, which indicate the correlation between the non-observable variables and the measurable variables used to measure them, are defined as regression coefficient factor loads. "These coefficients are important as they interpret the nature of the variables which are in strongest relation with a given factor; the nature of variables help determine the meaning and nature of a given

factor" (Cappelleri & Gerber, 2003, p. 344). According to the Parsimony principle, which claims that the best answer to a question is the shortest answer, one of the basic elements of a hypothesis test is the simplification of the model, which means using the least number of parameters possible in a model (Crawley, 2005). For this reason, the best indicators that measure a structure must be retained. Although there is not a certain threshold value to eliminate low factors, Malthouse (2001) stated that "the size of the factors must be 0.30 at the least" (p. 81). However, he emphasised that this is still a subjective standard and that this threshold size depends on such factors as the size of the sample, whether the study is exploratory and the characteristics of the research. For example, in some cases, although the factor loads are under 0.30, the researcher must take the theory he/she tests as the basis and evaluate the factors in detail. In the light of these explanations, the threshold value of 0.30 determined by Malthouse was used in this study. Table 2 provides the findings of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

Table 2. Revised Models – Model Conformity Statistics

Index	Criteria	Historical Causes and effect	Historical periodization	Historical Synthesising	Using of historical sources	Historical literacy	Historical analysing
χ^2	low	39,8	12,934	14,78	45,227	,683	13,71
sd	≥ 0	20	9	14	27	2	5
p	$\geq 0,05$	0,01	0,166	0,394	0,015	,711	0,018
χ^2/df	<3	1,99	1,437	1,056	1,675	,342	2,742
GFI	>,90	0,97	0,987	0,988	0,972	,999	0,984
AGFI	>,90	0,95	0,971	0,976	0,954	,996	0,952
TLI	>,90	0,91	0,978	0,997	0,961	1,013	0,941
NFI	>,90	0,88	0,959	0,962	0,932	,995	0,955
RMSEA	$\leq 0,05$	0,05	0,035	0,013	0,044	0,00	0,071

The historical thinking skill scale is a scale prepared in the 5-Likert type. In the scale, there were 43 items before factor analysis; however, 6 of the items were removed according to the data obtained from the factor analysis and the remaining 37 items were grouped into the components given in the table above. In this context, the items in the usage of historical sources component are 18,28,32,36,37,38,39,40, and 41; the items in the historical synthesising component are 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 22 and 33; the items in the historical problem component are 12, 16, 23, 24 and 30; the items in the historical periodization component are 2, 3, 5, 9, 10 and 17; the items in the historical cause and effect component are 4, 7, 8, 25, 26, 27 and 43 and in the historical literacy component, they were 29, 34 and 35. In the qualitative data collection stage, a semi-structured interview form was used. The researchers prepared nine open-ended questions. While preparing these questions, the literature on historical thinking skills was analysed (Akıncı Güngör, 2011; Bayramoğlu, 2016; Erdoğan, 2007; Işık, 2008; Kızılay, 2014; Şahin, 2014; Talin, 2015; Viator, 2012; Waring & Robinson, 2015) and three scholars in the field of history education were consulted. The questions were prepared in a manner that would enable the researchers to obtain detailed data on learning in the experimental application process. Student opinions on such topics as whether the obtained knowledge can be used in daily life, the similarities and differences between activities and the history classes they had attended before, group activities, whether activities increased their interest in classes, the most and least liked activities, whether activities similar to those in experimental application should be repeated and criticisms of activities were sought through semi-structured interview forms.

Analysis of Data

The SPSS program was used in the quantitative research and descriptive statistics related to pre-test and post-test scores (mean, median and standard deviation) were calculated. In order to calculate whether there was a significant difference between the mean values, the collected data were analysed using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, which is a non-parametric type of analysis, due to such reasons as the size of the sample and the used scales were based on ranking (Ho, 2006; Field, 2009). In qualitative research, on the other hand, content analysis was used to create codes and themes, tabulate findings and direct citations were made from student opinions in the essays. The direct citations made from student opinions were coded as S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5.

Results and Interpretation

In order to answer the first sub-problem of the study, the scores obtained by secondary school students who participated in the study from the historical thinking skills scale both before and after the application are given in the table below.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics on Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Scale	Mean	Median	Most Repeated Value	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Historical Source Usage-1	2,76	2,22	1,78	1,05	0,927
Historical Source Usage -2	3,95	3,78	3,22	0,6	0,86
Historical Synthesising-1	3,1	2,86	2,14	0,83	0,839
Historical Synthesising -2	4,01	3,86	3,71	0,64	0,868
Historical Problem Analysis-1	3,22	3	2,6	0,95	0,814
Historical Problem Analysis -2	3,82	3,4	3,4	0,73	0,824
Historical Periodization-1	2,68	2,33	2,33	0,56	0,657
Historical Periodization -2	3,64	3,5	3,33	0,59	0,677
Historical Literacy-1	3,21	3	3	1,38	0,868
Historical Literacy -2	3,3	3	3	1,06	0,803
Historical Cause and Effect-1	3,25	3,12	4	0,61	0,752
Historical Cause and Effect -2	3,86	3,75	3,38	0,47	0,75
Historical Thinking Skill-1	3,04	2,8	2,2	0,84	0,949
Historical Thinking Skill -2	3,76	3,51	3,18	0,62	0,937

However, there is are differences between the pre-test and post-test mean values of the scale. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was applied to identify whether these differences are statistically significant; in other words, whether the difference between the attitude scale scores in regard to historical thinking skills of the student group subjected to the test before and after education are statistically significant.

Table 4. Wilcoxon* Signed-Rank Test Results of Historical Thinking Skill Pre-test / Post-test Scores

Pre-test-post-test Score	Mean	Ranks	N	Rank mean	Rank total	Z	P	R
Historical Thinking Skill Post-Test	3,76	Negative ranks	1	1,00	1,00			
Historical Thinking Skill Pre-Test	3,04	Positive ranks	10	6,50	65,00	-2,809	0,005	-0,59888
		Equal	0					
		Total	11					

* Based on negative ranks base

r= Impact Size: $r=z/\sqrt{N}$

When Table 4 is examined, it can be seen that there is a significant difference regarding the entire historical thinking scale between the scores obtained by the students before and after education according to the Wilcoxon analysis results ($z=-2.809$, $p<0.01$). When the rank totals of the difference scores are taken into consideration, it is seen that this difference is in favour of the positive ranks and post-test scores. According to these results, it can be said that the provided education developed historical thinking skills and was effective. The size of the impact is higher than 0.5 as a result of which, it can be said that it has a wide impact size. This result shows that the difference between the two groups is acceptably large.

Table 5. Wilcoxon* Signed-Rank Test Results of Pre-test / Post-test scores of Historical Thinking Skill Sub-Dimension Scales

Sub-dimensions	Test	\bar{x}	Z	p	r
Historical Source Usage	Pre-test	2,76	-2,847	0,004*	-0,60698
	Post-test	3,95			
Historical Synthesising	Pre-test	3,1	-2,807	0,005*	-0,60655
	Post-test	4,01			
Historical Problem Analysis	Pre-test	3,22	-2,608	0,009*	-0,55602
	Post-test	3,82			
Historical Periodization	Pre-test	2,68	-2,946	0,003*	-0,62808
	Post-test	3,64			
Historical Literacy	Pre-test	3,21	-0,543	0,587	-0,11576
	Post-test	3,3			
Historical Cause and Effect	Pre-test	3,25	-2,809	0,005*	-0,59888
	Post-test	3,86			

* Based on negative ranks base

$r = \text{Impact Size} = z/\sqrt{N}$

According to the test results given in Table 5, there is a significant difference between the scores of the students before and after the experimental application in terms of the historical source usage ($z=-2.847$, $p<0.01$), historical synthesising ($z=-2.807$, $p<0.01$), historical problem analysis ($z=-2.608$, $p<0.01$), historical periodization ($z=-2.946$, $p<0.01$) and historical cause and effect ($z=-2.809$, $p<0.01$) sub-dimensions. When the rank totals of the difference scores are taken into consideration, it can be seen that this difference is in favour of the positive ranks and post-test scores. According to these results, it can be said that the provided education developed historical thinking skills and was effective. However, the analysis results show that there is no significant difference between the scores obtained before and after the education by students from the historical literacy sub-scale ($z=-0.543$, $p>0.01$). Accordingly, it can be stated that the education provided did not create any changes in the students' historical literacy skills. When the impact sizes are examined, it can be seen that the size of all impacts other than historical literacy are above 0.5, for which reason it can be said that it has a wide impact size. This result shows that the difference between the two groups is acceptably large.

Table 6. Student Opinions in Regard to the Experimental Application Process

Main Theme	Theme
Acquisitions (acquired through the application process)	Using the learned elements in daily life
	Increased interest in the history class
Content (information learned during activities)	The past-history of Cyprus
	Social life and culture in Cyprus
	Historical artefacts in Cyprus
	Concise information on the world outside Cyprus
Comparison (Comparison of activities with previous history classes)	Its similarity with previous history classes in terms of course content
	Being more fun
	Using student-centred teaching methods/techniques (group work, trips, showing and doing etc.)
	Simplification of the content and ease of learning information
Criticism (critique of the activities in the application process)	The need for increasing student participation in classes
	The need for increasing student-centred teaching methods
	Some activities are boring
	The need for more extra-class activities

An examination of the qualitative findings of the research given in Table 6 shows that the student opinions in regard to the application process are concentrated under four main themes, namely the acquisitions obtained at the end of the application process, information obtained through activities, comparison of the learning experiences in the application process with previous history classes and criticism towards the experimental process.

Students stated that they would use what they learned in daily life. One interviewed student expressed this as follows: *"I can use what I learned in my daily life. In order to increase my general culture, to be successful in history exams and to learn the historical places in Cyprus better..."* (S1) Additionally, students revealed that their interest in history class increased at the end of the application. For example, one student stated: *"I also learned in visual terms"* (S2), while another said *"thanks to the trips and videos, I saw that the history class can be more interesting"* (S1).

The second theme that appeared during the interviews was related to the information obtained during the application process. Students showed that they had particularly learned about "The past-history of Cyprus", "Social life and culture in Cyprus", "Historical artefacts in Cyprus" and "Concise information on the world outside Cyprus". Citations from student opinions in regard to these themes are given below:

"I learned information on Cyprus history" (S2)

"I learned different words used in Cyprus" (S3)

"With trips, I learned historical artefacts better" (S5)

"I learned about Ghandi." (S5)

The third main theme explored based on the qualitative findings of the study was named comparison. Accordingly, the experimental application process that was based on content analysis was compared with previous history classes. As stated by one student, *"the club is more fun, we watched videos at history club, we watched movies, we went on trips and observed"* (S1); the application process was found to be more enjoyable and it was stated that student-centred teaching methods were employed. On the

other hand, it was commented that the course content was simplified and it was easier to learn. The opinions of three students in this context are as follows:

“We are mostly summarising the subjects at history club” (S4)

“What we do at the club is more easily remembered” (S3)

“Classes are more learning-oriented at history club” (S5)

Contrary to these three opinions, some indicated that the courses in the application process had similarities with previous classes. One of the opinions was as follows: *“there are both similarities and differences. The similarity is that in both, we obtain information on history...”* (S1).

Finally, it can be seen that there is a main theme under the title “critique in regard to the experimental application process”. In this theme, criticisms were grouped under four sub-themes: the need for increasing student participation, student-centred teaching methods and techniques, and extra-class activities. The citations related to these indicated themes are as follows:

“Opinions of students must be sought so that activities can be more efficient.” (S5)

“I would increase the number of trips. I would organize trips to the historical sites in Kyrenia too. I would increase the number of films and games.” (S1)

“I would add more extra-class activities. We are getting bored at school.” (S3)

In addition to these themes, students who participated in the study stated that library visits in particular were boring. One student said: *“I would not take students to the library. It was so boring.”* (S4).

Conclusion, Discussion, and Suggestions

The historical thinking skill scale developed in this study was administered to the students in the experiment group as a pre-test before and post-test after the experimental practice. In the light of the obtained information, significant differences were found between the mean values of the six components apart from historical literacy. In the periodization (chronological thinking) component, which is the first among historical thinking skills, positive changes were identified between the periods before and after activities; in other words, a difference was found between the pre-test and post-test scores. In regard to the development of this skill, the objective is to comprehend the continuity of events in cause and effect relations while comprehending the time when historical events occurred and the periods in which historical figures lived as a result of which they could solve the relations between events and persons in the timeline. In 7 of the 14 activities developed in accordance with the Kemp, Morrison and Ross teaching design, the purpose of improving periodization skills was the main point. Considering these activities, the effectiveness of foreign words in the Turkish language and the change in language used by Turkish Cypriot students in different periods was observed first and the learners were expected to establish connections between the continuity of words and historical events. In his study, Metin (2011) identified a relationship between the usage of historical language in history classes and the chronological development of the language and claimed that this relation improved the periodisation skills of students. Supporting this opinion, Dilek and Soğucaklı Yapıcı (2005) emphasised that there is a positive relationship between the language development of a person and his/her historical thinking development. Activities titled “non-Muslims in Cyprus in Ottoman period” and “Cypriot society in British era” aimed to improve the chronological thinking skills of students. With the help of photographs which were used as first-hand resources in these activities, the chronological change in Cypriot society was followed visually. Akbaba (2005) conducted two studies supporting these findings and argued that using photographs in history teaching improved the chronological ordering skills of learners more easily. In the drama activity, students acted as leaders and the purpose of which was to improve their ability to establish a connection between persons and periods. Altıkulaç and Akhan (2010) performed creative drama activities covering the history of revolution course and concluded that it helped students to concretize historical periods more easily. In addition to these activities, students were expected to periodise persons and events based on a historical movie. In his study which

supported this expectation, Güven (2014) emphasised that with historical movies, students could concretize periods thus facilitating their perception of historical continuity. In the activity which included a neighbourhood trip, students tried to identify the periods to which the historical buildings and structures belonged. In a study conducted in the United States, Marino (2012) stated that historical buildings were first-hand sources and that the periodisation skills of students who observe and study these buildings developed. Another study which supports these findings was conducted by Şimşek (2014). According to this study, individuals can observe the historical buildings and signs in their environment and perceive historical change and continuity.

In the historical analysis component, which is one of the six components, a significant difference was also identified between the tests. The objective of the historical analysis skill was to improve the questioning, interpretation and historical empathy skills of students. The obtained data shows that these skills of the students are in development. An examination of these results shows that the seven activities of the developed teaching design are aimed at achieving progress in these skills. In the light of this objective, the aim of the activity on non-Muslims in Cypriot society in Ottoman era was to ensure that students analyse and interpret texts and photographs that were first-hand sources. Studying the impact of using first-hand sources on historical analysis and interpretation, Işık (2011) found that the historical analysis and interpretation of students improved as a result of studying with first-hand sources. The aim of the activity examining the social structure of Cyprus in the British era and the activity including the dramatization of leaders was to improve the historical analysis and historical empathy skills of students. In the study conducted by Otten, Stigler, Woodward, and Staley (2004), who performed a drama-based historical education activity, it was found that students were interested in the course and that their empathy skills developed. Another study connecting the historical empathy skill and the drama method was conducted by Aysal (2012) as a result of, which positive changes were observed in the learning skills of students. In the activity titled "solution proposal", students watched videos about the solutions they produced to the problems of the political leaders, which was aimed at improving both the historical analysis and empathy skills of students. Supporting this objective, Stoddard (2012) emphasised in his study that the understanding of students concerning historical events and personalities developed with historical movies. Aytekin and Çoban (2012) obtained similar results and found that individuals were more easily able to establish a connection between the past and present through the use of historical movies.

In conceptual terms, historical literacy is explained as the obtained historical knowledge not being aimless, integrating it with life and using it in daily life (Güven, 2014). According to the analysis conducted in this study, no significant difference was found between the historical literacy skills of students. This result highlights the problem of an almost non-existent connection between the knowledge obtained in history education and daily life, which is one of the most important problems of history teaching curricula (Demircioğlu, 2014; Gilbert, 2011; Ijaz, Bogdanovych, & Trescak, 2017; Işık, 2008; Wang, Li, Shen, & Meng, 2017). This problem was taken into consideration in the activities performed based on the teaching design in the study and neighbourhood trips were organized so that a connection could be established between daily life and historical information. Within this activity, solutions were proposed to the Cyprus issue, movies were watched on the history of Cyprus issue, videos and news on the refugee problem were examined and, in general, activities considering the problems of the present were implemented. However, the findings obtained at the end of the study show that there is no difference between pre-test and post-test scores. According to these findings, it is believed that the contents of activities aimed at developing the historical literacy skill in the study should be improved and the number of such activities should be increased, which could be beneficial for the development of the aforementioned skill.

Another skill which the activities in experimental application process aim to improve was related to historical sources. The purpose here was to ensure that students obtain the ability to access historical resources by doing research and to perform historical interpretation using these sources. A significant difference was found in terms of the skills of students for studying and using historical sources in the findings according to the pre-test/post-test results of the historical thinking abilities scale. In order to improve the mentioned skills of the students, historical sources were included in the six activities in the teaching design. In addition to these activities, a library visit was performed in another activity to ensure that students could access historical sources. In both activities, students examined photographs on the structure of the society. In another study conducted in the United States, historical photographs were given to the students and it was observed that students could establish connections between the historical information they acquired more easily after examining these photographs and that their analysis skills were improved (Lindquist, 2012). In addition to photographs, in the activity titled "I am visiting my neighbourhood", students had the opportunity to observe and examine historical buildings. In these examinations, it was observed that as historical buildings are first-hand sources, the ability of students to make inferences and interpretations on the structure of the society improved. Gökkaya and Yeşilbursa (2009) stated that using historical buildings in social science courses, which constitute the foundations of history courses, led to improvements in the analysis, interpretation and evaluation skills of the students. Another activity which was performed in line with these objectives was visits to a folk arts centre where handcrafts were examined; the type of historical source provided by the figures on these handcrafts was discussed and students were expected to make inferences. In a study conducted under the auspices of the Council of Europe (2016), it was found that history teaching through art improved cultural awareness in learners and strengthened their multi-perspective views.

Another historical thinking skill which the study aimed to improve was historical synthesising. The purpose of the historical synthesising skill is to ensure that the students analyse the information obtained from historical sources and make inferences, interpretations and synthesis to create new information. Historical synthesising is accepted as a cutting-edge skill and was stated among the objectives in most of the activities; however, not all students were expected to develop this skill. Contrary to this hypothesis, a significant difference was found in the findings of the pre-test / post-test conducted within the historical thinking skill scale. These findings show that most students were able to develop this skill. An examination of the activities aimed at improving this skill shows that the activity titled "foreign words in our language" involved students making inferences from the words in historical texts and examining the texts including these words as a result of which, they could make better sense of the administration and social structure of that historical period. In a parallel study, Ulusoy (2009b) found that eighth grade students were successful in interpreting historical texts without need for any additional activities. In addition, Ulusoy also argued that students had some prejudices towards historical texts. This result can be related to the historical literacy skill obtained in this study. In another activity, students were given historical sources associated with different authors and periods and were expected to analyse the changes in the texts according to the viewpoints of authors towards non-Muslims and then to give their own opinions, mix it with the present social structure, and create a synthesis. Işık (2008) obtained data which supported the findings of this research and identified significant differences in the pre-test / post-test results of the learning performed by students from historical sources in the experimental group. In the activity related to refugees, learners were asked to analyse the concept of the refugee, question the problems experienced by refugees and synthesise the continuity and changes in the problems that refugees have suffered from the past to the present. With this purpose, students were shown photographs and videos reflecting refugees from different places and periods. In their study, which was based on history teaching with documentary videos, Hernández-Ramos and La Paz (2009) identified a significant difference in favour of the experimental group and concluded that the historical thinking abilities of the group were improved. In another activity, students were shown wedding photographs, memoirs and videos depicting societies that lived in Cyprus in different periods with the purpose of ensuring that students analysed the role of women in wedding culture and the change that it underwent and to synthesise and question the wedding culture and the

role of women in society as “local history”. Dilek (2016) conducted a similar study on female athletes and found that based on the knowledge acquired by students with the local history method, their viewpoint towards the history of women and history teaching changed in a positive direction. In the activity titled “leaders reigned in Cyprus”, which was performed using the drama method, students were asked to analyse the different governments that had ruled in Cyprus based on which they could question the existence of different cultures in Cyprus and synthesise them around the idea of multiculturalism. In the experimental study conducted by Erdal and Vural (2015), students conducted a drama activity and the findings indicated that they could produce analysis on the Armenian question more easily and that their synthesis skills were developed.

In this study, the ability to establish a historical cause and effect relationship was obtained as another historical thinking skill. With this skill, students are expected to perform periodisation, analyse and question events, terms and personalities, develop historical empathy for persons, reach and use historical sources, synthesise the new information with their existing knowledge and present conditions; resultantly they will be able to evaluate the causes and effects of historical events and phenomena while examining historical events, concepts and persons. In accordance with this explanation, it should be taken into consideration that the development of this skill is required in all activities in the teaching design which shaped this study. In the findings of pre-test /post-test analysis performed with the historical thinking skill scale, a significant difference was identified in the scale scores of the students in the sample related to the mentioned skill. This finding is contrary to many studies which concluded that the development of establishing historical cause and effect relationships, which is reflected as a top-level skill, is in fact difficult. For example, in the study conducted by Özbaş Çulha (2010), a variety of resources were presented to students as evidence but, according to the results, students evaluated the interpretation of historical events in a different manner than historians and perceived it not as diversity, but as a problem. This case showed that students still preserve rote-learning elements and find it difficult to perform evaluations based on cause and effect relationships in historical evidence.

The quantitative findings of the study have been evaluated and interpreted up to this point. At this stage, the following interpretations are provided based on the qualitative findings obtained in the study. In regard to the findings on acquisitions, which is the first main theme, it has been found that the students began to use the knowledge they acquired with the history of Cyprus activities in their daily lives and that their interest in the history course increased. It can be said that using learning by doing techniques in activities, which is very important today, is critical in the emergence of acquisition. Activities related to the Cyprus issue, which is considered as an important problem of the present, and the refugee problem, which is another important topic, were performed. With these activities, it can be observed that students who participated in the study can improve their awareness on the connections of history teaching with daily life. In addition, the increase in the interest of students in history teaching, which is identified as another acquisition, can be attributed to active learning techniques such as travel and observe activities, particularly with historical sites, the historical games played, historical photographs examined, videos and historical films watched and the drama activities performed. Having reached similar conclusions, Ayva (2010) displayed in his study that delivering history topics in social science courses with an active learning approach was welcomed by students. In Ayva’s (2010) study, similar to this study, students stated that they enjoyed having visual materials such as photographs and videos in the courses as well as performing extra-class activities such as travel and observation.

The second main theme in the qualitative findings has been identified as the content of the history courses. The information acquired based on the activities applied in this theme has been identified as concise information on the general history of Cyprus, socio-cultural history of Cyprus, historical artefacts in Cyprus and information concerning the world. An examination of the activities showed that the fundamental purpose of all activities was to convey general historical information concerning Cyprus. The results of the content analysis concluded that students realised this purpose.

The socio-cultural history of Cyprus, which is determined as the second sub-theme, was included in activities which reflected wedding culture, included folk arts and handcrafts, covered the British era in Cyprus and particularly examined the social structure, and the activity which involved non-Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus. In addition to these activities, it was found that with the neighbourhood trip activity, the history game teaching historical artefacts and the seminar on archaeological works in Cyprus equipped the students in the sample with information on the important artefacts in Cyprus. Additionally, another objective was to provide information on world history in relation to the history of Cyprus and it was thus ensured that students obtained concise information concerning the world.

It was observed that in terms of comparison, which was determined as the third main theme, students compared the applied activities with previous history courses, and observed similarities in terms of content between previous history courses and the activities in the experimental practice. However, it has been determined that the students who participated in the study particularly gave opinions on the manner with which the activities increased their motivation and desire for learning during observation in the experimental practice process and that they compared the teaching method used by previous history courses and the methods and techniques employed in activities in experimental practice. The historical artefacts game, world leaders drama activity, photograph analysis on Cypriot society, activities involving refugee videos, watching and interpreting historical movie and extra-school activities, which were all performed in the experimental practice process, were found to be more entertaining by students compared to courses delivered in the classroom environment. Based on these interpretations, it can be argued that students have raised awareness in regard to the methods and techniques used in the activities and that they experienced that learning through activities considered to be more entertaining could yield more permanent results.

In regard to the final main theme in qualitative research findings, criticism towards history of Cyprus and activities, it becomes clear that the students who participated in the study had higher expectations concerning student-centred learning. Additionally, there are some student opinions indicating that increasing the number of activities involving extra-school and active learning would yield more beneficial results. Most of the students in the experimental application process provided positive criticism on activities; however, a number of students expressed that they found some activities boring. Concerning these findings, the fact that all activities placed the student at the centre of an active learning focused approach could be received as a problem by students who were accustomed to traditional history courses. Furthermore, some students argued that extra-class activities in history courses should be increased, based on which it is believed that they developed positive attitudes towards the neighbourhood trip, handcrafts and folk arts activity, and the library trip, which were prepared with the travel and observe technique. It is remarkable that the most negatively criticised activity by students is the one related to the examination of historical sources in the library. It is believed that the negative opinions of students in relation to the mentioned activity are related to the historical literacy skill. As shown in the qualitative findings of the research, it is clear that the historical literacy skills of students were not developed as a result of the experimental application; considering the qualitative findings and the fact that the library activity was deemed boring, it is seen that qualitative findings of the study support the quantitative findings.

In summary, the strengths of this study can be listed as the introduction to the literature of a new measuring tool concerning historical thinking skills related to the field of history education, bringing constructivist theory to the fore and observing its effectiveness, and the exemplification of teaching design which is alternative to traditional history education. The limitation of the study is its failure to ensure improvement in students in terms of historical literacy. Finally, although the experimental application in this study has parallels with the existing history teaching curriculum and its content, it is evident that history teachers should make serious preparations in the planning and application of the course and should make considerable effort. Therefore, it is believed that this problem could be an obstacle preventing the readiness of teachers.

Finally, after the experimental study (Keleşzade, 2018), one of the researchers continued to observe the situation of students in relation to the history courses. It has been observed that there is a clear difference in the interest levels of students who participated in the experimental study as it was recorded that the academic success of students in history of Cyprus and social sciences courses increased. This finding can be accepted as an indicator that students developed and internalised historical thinking skills.

In terms of the conclusions interpreted above, the following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

- 1- Having examined the differences between the pre-test and post-test results of the historical thinking skills scale, it is recommended that teaching curricula centred on active learning and students as well as giving more focus to extra-class activities should be designed so that students can develop those skills.
- 2- In terms of the teaching design in the study, it is recommended that giving more space to activities which support courses in extra-class activities such as history clubs could increase interest in learning.
- 3- It is observed that students particularly preferred travel and observe activities among the extra-class activities performed in this study. Thus, as examination on-site could create more permanent learning, it is recommended that extra-school history trips are performed more frequently.
- 4- Based on student opinions, it is observed that giving more space to visual materials such as photographs, videos and movies ensures effectiveness of courses and supports learning skills. Therefore, visual materials must be used in history courses.
- 5- Considering that individuals can experience more permanent learning in relation to characters with whom they could develop empathy, it is recommended that historical the empathy dimension in history education curricula is supported with as activities such as theatre and drama.
- 6- Considering the familiarity of modern students with technology, technological materials should be used more frequently so that the interest of students in history classes can be increased.
- 7- It is recommended that the more attention should be paid to connection of course activities with daily life so that individuals can use the information they acquire in courses in their daily lives and that activities in this direction should be increased.
- 8- The opinion that increasing inter-disciplinary studies and research will increase analysis, interpretation, synthesising and evaluation skills of students should be taken into consideration in the preparation of teaching curricula.
- 9- Considering that individuals are motivated by enjoyment while learning, it is recommended that the number of activities such as games, dramas and travel in courses is increased.
- 10- In order to increase the interest of students in history courses, it is believed that cooperative historical research projects would be beneficial.
- 11- When the differences between pre-test and post-test results of the study are examined, a significant difference has not been identified in the historical literacy skill. Based on this conclusion, the number of activities which are aimed at increasing the historical literacy skills of students should be increased. It is recommended that historical novels, stories and tales should provide support in the development of the historical literacy skills of students and historical newspapers and the articles of columnists on history should be interpreted critically.

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