

Full Length Research Paper

Social studies teacher candidates' views on historical thinking skills

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Current study aimed to present Social Studies teacher candidates' views on historical thinking skills. Study was conducted using qualitative design and working group was composed of a total of 121 teacher candidates (62 females and 59 males) attending Social Studies Teaching Department of Karadeniz Technical University and Adiyaman University Faculties of Education. Results showed that Social Studies teacher candidates were aware of historical thinking skills and they regarded historical thinking skills as important although they did not fully develop thinking skills in the area and they wished to receive training in the field. The fact that the majority of Social Studies teacher candidates perceived historical thinking skills as thinking about history regarding the conditions of a specific period and some teacher candidates perceived historical thinking skills as empathizing with and comprehending historical events may be interpreted in a manner that teacher candidates perceived historical thinking as historical comprehension. Research results showed that other dimensions and sub dimensions of historical thinking skills were not highly emphasized by the candidates. Teacher candidates stated that the biggest problem in acquiring historical thinking skills was related to the method used in teaching.

Key words: Social studies, history, historical thinking

INTRODUCTION

History teaching, which was previously accepted as “the casebook of the past” and perceived as teaching past events chronologically to students (Sungu, 2002), has undergone a major transformation due to influences created by recent political, economic and technical advances and changes, problems faced by individuals and societies, individual relationships and social value norms (MEB., 2011: 5; MEB, 2010: 6). Today, history teaching aims to contribute to students' life in some way (Sungu, 2002). When student acquisition of knowledge,

skills and behaviors that are required to form a balance between the expectations of society and human needs is in question, history teaching becomes crucial as a social studies discipline (Öztaş and Turan, 2009) and educating individuals with awareness of and sensitivity towards history is included among the general goals of this teaching field (MEB., 2011: 5; MEB, 2010: 6). Also, the most significant role of history teaching is providing students with sufficient information and skills about the life they take part in.

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The sole intention of history teaching is not providing information about past events but to understand the phases that the humanity has undergone till today and to better comprehend today's problems to generate a course of action based on this comprehension (Sungu, 2002). According to Collingwood (1996: 40), knowledge of history is the knowledge of the self in a sense. Knowing oneself means knowing what to do. Since no one can know what to do without trying it first, the only clue is what has been done before. Hence, the value of history lies in its teaching about what humanity is and what it has accomplished so far.

In reality, talking about history is talking about everything; the topics of history are never related only to the past. People, states, systems, problems and even the present are included in sphere of interest. However, the past is always the main theme of history (Safran, 2011: 18).

Historical thinking skills

Historical thinking skills, one of the basic elements included among student requirements for acquisitions during history teaching, date back to 19th century (Drake and Nelson, 2005, cited in: Demircioğlu, 2009). Although historical thinking skills are somewhat different from critical thinking skills, they develop students' critical analysis skills while they examine a historical event or document (Anderson, 2013: 8). Historical thinking skills also allow teaching thinking skills based on logic and reasoning (URL.1). Students will assess the relationships between past events while they learn about history using logic and will be able to use historians' methods to observe how knowledge is generated (Demircioğlu, 2009).

Discussions following WWII were the main factor in including historical thinking skills in modern countries' history curriculums. In the 60's, the goal of teaching history in school programs was discussed in England for the first time and the main topic of those discussions was focused on the types of acquisitions students needed (Phillips, 1996 cited in: Demircioğlu 2009). According to Nichol (1984) even whether or not to teach history in English schools was discussed at that period. Similarly, allegations by developmental psychologists such as Piaget stating that necessary skills and concepts did not develop in children for historical thinking led educators to believe history teaching was to be lessened in amount or even removed altogether for younger children (Ata, 1999). Discussions in 70's in England regarding why and how history should be taught at schools made revolutionary contributions to the teaching and understanding of history (Hawkey, 2010). Definition of the relationship between thinking and historical learning provided by Jeanette Coltham opened up new horizons in history teaching (Vass, 2015). Coltham and Fines' work

in 1971 titled "Educational Objectives for the Study of History" (Booth, 1983) which aimed to define the structure of history and supported a history curriculum was an important step towards the development of history teaching taxonomy (Ata, 1999).

In short, history programs in England from 1960's to 1995 were organized in a manner in line with students' thinking processes and steps were taken to ensure and facilitate their logical thinking. History curriculums and programs in this period underwent a process based on rationality domineered by the optimistic views of Jerome Bruner contrary to Piaget's pessimistic ones. However, Englishmen did not ignore Piaget's cognitive stages of development altogether and they adopted teaching of history as a method of research as opposed to solely teaching historical information. Therefore, the idea became dominant that students should write their own history like historians by using resources (Ata, 1999).

A recent approach to history teaching is based on student interests and learning by doing, reflective teaching and critical approaches to history are dominant (Güven et. al., 2014: 2). Progressive organizations, that support dignified teaching of history that includes even the controversial topics based on multi perspectives, critical thinking and mutual respect, believe in the development of skills for innovation and transformation and strive to increase the quality of teaching history and citizenship by promoting teacher training and innovative teaching materials with a process-based approach (Roord, 2012: 6). History perception that is objective and free from sentimentalism will only be possible with teaching historical thinking skills that require analytical and scientific thinking (Demircioğlu, 2009). In this way, students will be able to better comprehend, visualize and restructure historical knowledge (Anderson, 2013: 8). In this context, various skills have been identified by The National Center for History in United States of America which included historical thinking skills in history programs. These skills are: (URL.2)

Chronological thinking skills

Chronological thinking, the base for the science of history, acts like a cognitive structure that organizes historical thinking. Chronology is the time and order of events that took place in the past. It is not possible for students to explore relationships between events and explain the cause and effect relationships without this skill (historical-thinking-standards/1).

Historical comprehension

Providing students with comprehension of historical texts and historical approaches will necessitate examination of history with the circumstances, concepts and

perspectives of the individual at a given time. Therefore, students learn to avoid assessment of historical documents with today's norms and concepts (historical-thinking-standards/2).

Historical analysis and interpretation

Historical investigations and research are not about memorizing concepts but to arrive at valid results by using evidence and assessing allegations and claims about a historical point. Students should comprehend that historians can utilize different concepts while creating historical texts. Students need to employ historical comprehension skills in order to undertake historical analysis and interpretations (historical-thinking-standards/3).

Historical research capabilities

Studying about or writing history is maybe the most exciting and constructive dimension of historical thinking. Students should develop hypotheses like a historian by presenting past problems and test these hypotheses to obtain results (Demircioğlu, 2009). In this way, students will better comprehend that written history is manmade obtained from research based on questioning and therefore it is temporary and open to discussions (historical-thinking-standards/4).

Historical issues-analysis and decision-making

Issue-centered analysis and decision-making skills provide students with experiences related to historical dilemmas and problems faced by others at critical moments in the past. Confronting the problems of those periods, analyzing the alternatives, evaluating the consequences of options that were not selected at the time and comparing those with the consequences of actions that were adopted are the activities that will increase student interest and participation. (historical-thinking-standards/5).

Knowledge once regarded at schools as the fundamental goal of education should not be perceived as the memorization of principles, concepts and phenomena. Utilization of knowledge is regarded to be more important than simply having it. Although knowledge will always preserve its value and importance, it will not be that crucial if students cannot use the obtained knowledge to develop several skills such as critical thinking and solving everyday problems (MEB, 2005a: 47; MEB, 2005b: 51).

Along with the reflection of developments in education and training and changes and diversity in educational tools as a result of employed methods and techniques on teaching programs and as a parallel to the developments teaching programs and as a parallel to the developments

in the world, historical thinking skills were introduced to Primary School Social Studies Programs in 2005 and to Secondary Schools History Programs in 2007 in Turkey (Doğan, 2011:159).

In this sense, it is crucial for social studies teacher candidates to be trained in line with the targets of the educational program and the views of social studies teacher candidates on historical thinking skills are important since they will be undertaking the role of providing secondary school students with these skills in the near future. In this context, current study aimed to identify social studies teacher candidates' views on historical thinking skills, identify what is needed and provide related suggestions.

METHOD

The study utilized a qualitative approach to determine social studies teacher candidates' views on historical thinking skills. Qualitative studies are types of research in which qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document review are used and which follow a process to present perceptions and events in natural environments, in a realistic and holistic manner (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). Since participant views are important in qualitative studies, current study aimed to have teacher candidates to express their ideas on historical thinking skills without limitations. As stated by Ekiz (2009), data in qualitative studies are mostly presented in words or visuals rather than numbers. Open-ended questions were used with this aim in mind and the data obtained from these questions were analyzed with the help of content analysis. Content analysis is a scientific approach that allows systematic and objective investigation of written, oral or other type of materials (Tavşancıl and Aslan, 2001). Content analysis is also defined as the process of summarizing and identifying the basic content and messages of the existing written information (Cohen et al., 2007).

Working group

Working group of the study was composed of a total of 121 teacher candidates (62 females and 59 males) attending Primary Social Studies Teaching Department of Karadeniz Technical University and Adiyaman University Faculties of Education in the fall semester of 2014-2015 academy year. Table 1 presents the descriptive data for the working group.

Data collection

Research data were collected by distributing the interview form to last year students attending Primary Social Studies Teaching Department of Karadeniz Technical University and Adiyaman University Faculties of Education in the fall semester of 2014-2015 academic year. Students were provided information about the purpose and content of the study; they were instructed that the study was purely scientific and they were allowed not to write their names while responding.

Data collection tool

"History Teachers' Views on Historical Thinking Skills" developed by İsmail (2009) was used as the data collection tool. The interview

Table 1. Distribution of social studies teacher candidates based on gender and university.

Social studies teacher candidates based on gender	f	%
Female	62	51.23
Male	59	48.76
Total	121	100

Social Studies Teacher Candidates Based on University	f	%
Karadeniz Technical University	79	65.28
Karadeniz Technical University	42	34.71
Adiyaman University	121	100

Table 2. Teacher candidates' views on historical thinking skills as a concept.

What do you understand from the term "historical thinking skills"?	f	%
Thinking in line with the circumstances of a specific period	66	54.54
Awareness of change, making connections among past-present-future	22	18.18
Empathizing	14	11.57
Criticizing and Questioning	13	10.74
Making comments	13	10.74
Comprehending historical events	10	8.33
Making research and presenting evidence	10	8.33
Deriving lessons from history	9	7.5
Recognizing chronology	8	6.66
Making cause and effect relationships	5	4.13
No idea- I don't know- No response	1	0.82

form included 6 open-ended questions. In order to adapt the form to social studies teacher candidates, expert views were sought and some items were changed. Later, two more items were added to the interview form in line with expert views.

Following the development of the adapted interview form, two experts in the field were asked to review the form in terms of clarity, intelligibility and appropriateness of the items. As a result, the items were accepted as appropriate for the purpose of the study.

Research questions

1. What do you understand from the term "historical thinking skills"?
2. What are historical thinking skills?
3. What kind of training have you received about historical thinking skills? If your answer is yes, was the training sufficient?
4. Have you ever participated in any educational activity related to historical thinking skills? If your answer is yes, please specify the type of activity?
5. Is there any work on historical thinking skills that you have read or know about? If your answer is yes, please provide information.
6. Why should historical thinking skills be taught to secondary school students?
7. Which methods and techniques should be used in teaching historical thinking skills?
8. What can be the problems related to teaching historical thinking skills?

Data analysis

Data obtained in the study were analyzed using content analysis method, one of the qualitative analysis techniques. Content analysis mainly focuses on arranging the data in a manner to simplify reader comprehension by combining similar data around specific concepts and themes and interpreting it (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). In this context, responses for each question provided by social studies teacher candidates were grouped based on their similarities and interpreted and selected statements were provided directly. Data analysis was repeated in one month by another researcher in the field and results were compared.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

This section includes the responses and interpretations provided by teacher candidates regarding the historical thinking skills interview form. Table 2 shows that social studies teacher candidates responded to the question "What do you understand from the term "historical thinking skills"?" by citing the following: Thinking in line with the circumstance of a specific period (54.54%), awareness of change, making connections among past-present-future (18.18%) and empathizing (11.57%). There were also responses not included in the table such

Table 3. Views on what historical thinking skills are .

What are historical thinking skills?	f	%
Empathizing	44	36.36
Chronological thinking	31	25.61
Historical analysis and interpretation	25	20.66
Critical thinking	21	17.35
Thinking in line with the circumstances of the period	18	14.87
Using evidence	17	14.04
Forming cause and effect relationships	11	9.09
Objective thinking	16	13.22
Historical comprehension	9	7.43
Research based on historical questioning	8	6.61
Connecting past-present-future	8	6.61
Perceiving the change and continuity	5	4.13
Making decisions	2	1.65
Respecting differences	2	1.65
No idea- I don't know- No response	22	18.18

as objective perspective, interest in history and protection of cultural heritage. Responses show that teacher candidates have awareness about historical thinking skills even though they are not able to fully express it. For instance;

TC. 48. *History is a science that attempts to explain human activities throughout ages with cause and effect relationships and the issues in this discipline include "what were the problems of people living in the past, how did they produce solutions to their problems, how did they manage it"; in line with this, students will learn how to react based on both the case and will acquire awareness by being informed of their ancestors' activities".*

TC. 50. *Individuals who argue that historical events and concepts should be evaluated based on the circumstances of the period in question, not based on today's conditions, individuals who make their criticisms in this respect.*

TC. 2. *I do not completely know what historical thinking skills are. But, thinking based on period, thinking considering the circumstances of that period. Or maybe making relationships among events throughout time and bringing these issues to the present and deriving lessons from them.*

Table 3 presents the responses to the question "What are historical thinking skills?". As seen from the Table, 18.18% of social studies teacher candidates did not reply the question or stated that they did not know what those skills were.

The most frequently cited responses are as follows: Empathizing (36.36%), chronological thinking, (25.61%) and historical analysis and interpretation (20.61%). None of the teachers were able to cite historical thinking skills completely; however some of the teacher candidates expressed some of these skills indirectly. They mostly

stated the sub skills related to the main skills. A few of the teacher candidates were able to provide 3 or 4 of the skills. For instance;

TC.11: *It is assessing an event according to the circumstances and values of the period in which it has taken place. It is also deriving lessons from our history and these skills help planning the present and the future. The main skills of the concept are chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation and research based on historical questioning.*

TC. 3. *Forming cause and effect relationships, emphasizing, critical thinking, perceiving time and chronology, perceiving change and continuity skills*

TC. 36. *Chronological thinking skill, historical problem analysis and decision making skill*

Table 4 presents the responses to the following question: What kind of training have you received about historical thinking skills? If your answer is yes, was the training sufficient? 51.23% of social studies teacher candidates stated that they did not receive any training on historical thinking skills whereas 47.10% expressed that their training was included during classes. From the teacher candidates who received training, 23.96% found it sufficient whereas 23.14% found the training insufficient. As the responses point to, the majority of teacher candidates either did not receive any training or found their training on historical thinking skills insufficient. Teacher candidates who reported having training on the topic generally learned about the concept indirectly in special education methods or history classes. For example;

TC. 29. *Yes, our teacher mentioned that in special education methods course.*

Table 4. Views on receiving education on historical thinking skills.

What kind of training have you received about historical thinking skills? If your answer is yes, was the training sufficient?	f	%
No	62	51.23
During class	57	47.10
Sufficient	29	23.96
Insufficient	28	23.14
No answer	2	1.65

Table 5. Views on participation in educational activities regarding historical thinking skills.

Have you ever participated in any educational activity related to historical thinking skills? If your answer is yes, please specify the type of activity?	f	%
No	85	66.94
Conference Seminar, Symposium	24	19.83
Trips to Museums and Historical Places	17	14.04
No answer	4	3.30

TC. 3. Yes, I did. I did under special education class. We learned about historical empathy but it is not sufficient. Because social studies teacher should provide historical thinking skills, not (teach) history.

TC. 39. I have not received any special class (on this) but my history teachers helped me acquire this skill.

TC.48. I have not received any training but I would like to, especially for this discipline.

TC. 50. I took all these unnecessary classes, but have not received any training on this.

Responses present that the majority of candidates consider historical thinking skills to be important and they agree that training on the topic should be provided skills.

Table 5 provides the responses to the question "Have you ever participated in any educational activity related to historical thinking skills? If your answer is yes, please specify the type of activity?". 66.94% of social studies teacher candidates reported that they did not participate in such activities. 19.83% stated that they took part in activities such as conferences, seminars and symposiums. 14.04% participated in trips to museums of historical places. Considering that the candidates who did not provide a response to the question also did not take part in such activities, 70.24% of the participating candidates never attended any educational activities related to historical thinking skills. Responses provided by candidates who reported visiting historical places or museums show that they mostly visited Gaziantep Zeugma Museum and Adiyaman Museum and that those trips were beneficial in terms of historical thinking skills. For instance;

TC.82: Yes we did, especially the experiences during

museum education in Zeugma and Adiyaman Museums were molded with historical thinking skills.

TC.120: Yes I did. Although the conference on museum as a conference activity is not an accurate example for this situation, it can be given as a n example. We experienced just this situation during the Zeugma trip.

TC.118. yes I did, we went to the museum. We assessed the materials for that time in the passage of history.

Statements point to the fact that museum trips positively affected students' historical thinking skills. Some of the candidates were found to assess any conferences on history in this context as well.

TC.39: Yes, I participated in symposium on the History of Turkish Education in the auditorium.

TC: 113: I attended historical thinking activities, specifically the history conferences

Table 6 provides responses to the following question: Is there any work on historical thinking skills that you have read or know about? If your answer is yes, please provide information. 71.90% of social studies teacher candidates responded to this question with no, whereas 14.87% mentioned historical texts, novels and 9.09% cited textbooks and articles. It is observed that the majority of teacher candidates have not read about historical thinking skills. Many of the candidates who reported having read about these skills also stated that these materials did not directly mention historical thinking skills but were mostly novels or historical texts. For instance;

TC: 84. 19th Century Political History. Since the book

Table 6. Views on reading materials related to historical thinking skills.

Is there any work on historical thinking skills that you have read or know about? If your answer is yes, please provide information.	f	%
No	87	71.90
Historical Works - Novels	18	14.87
Textbooks- Articles	11	9.09
No response	5	4.13

Table 7. Teacher candidates' views on why historical thinking skills should be taught to secondary school students

Why should historical thinking skills be taught to secondary school students?	f	%
For effective teaching of history	20	16.52
So that they can derive lessons from history	19	15.70
Since it is the best period for them to learn	18	14.87
So that they can undertake historical analysis and interpretations	15	12.39
So that they can think about history based on the circumstances of specific periods	14	11.57
So that they can think critically	11	9.09
So that they can connect past-present-future	7	5.78
So that they can obtain an objective perspective	7	5.78
So that they understand history better	6	4.95
So that they can empathize	6	4.95
No answer	6	4.95
Other	18	14.04

explains history by including people, it develops historical thinking skills.

TC. 114. *I read Şah and Sultan by İskender Pala.*

TC.113. *I read historical novels about historical thinking skills. Ateşten Gömlek by Halide Edip Adivar, Sodom and Gomorra by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu.*

TC. 39. *Cumhuriyetin İlk Yüzyılı by İlber Ortaylı, Dünün Dünyası by Stefan Zweig.*

TC. 57. *Dünün Dünyası by Stefan Zweig, Abdulhamit'in Kurtlarla Dansı 1,2 by Mustafa Armağan.*

Students who reported reading historical thinking skills mentioned that they benefited from special education methods or textbooks. For instance;

TC. 105. *I read a section on historical thinking skill in the textbook by Mustafa Safran*

TC. 3. *Yes, I did; I read sections in a book titled teaching history about historical empathy, historical thinking.*

As the responses present, the majority of teacher candidates are unaware of materials that can help them in developing historical thinking skills.

Table 7 cites the answers provided to the question "Why should historical thinking skills be taught to secondary school students?". The most frequent replies provided by social studies teacher candidates to this

questions are as follows: "For effective teaching of history" (16.52%), "so that they can derive lessons from history" (15.70%) and "since it is the best period for them to learn" (14.87%). In addition to the contents of the table provided above, some students mentioned providing research skills, proving an awareness of history, providing aesthetical thinking, perceiving continuity and change, developing scientific thinking skills and perceiving chronology. A large part of teacher candidates stated that secondary school period is the best time to teach historical thinking skills. For instance;

TC.22. *(Those skills) should be taught to secondary school students because students at secondary levels should have historical thinking skills.*

TC.66. *Students at that age should be provided with these skills since they have moved to abstract thinking from concrete thinking stage.*

TC. 40. *It will be effective to provide students at earliest-most appropriate ages depending on their developmental characteristics for students to acquire, use and develop those skills.*

TC. 66. *When students are provided with historical thinking skills during the teaching of history in that starts with social studies classes, it (will be) important for those students when they are at high school in terms of perceiving the issues in history classes, making*

Table 8. Views on methods and techniques that should be used in teaching historical thinking skills

Which methods and techniques should be used in teaching historical thinking skills?	f	%
Question-Answer	33	27.27
Drama	23	19.00
Discussions	22	18.18
Discovery Teaching	17	14.04
Research	14	11.57
Presentation	12	9.91
Brain storming	10	8.26
Use of evidence	9	7.43
Watching historical movies	8	6.61
Trips to historical places	8	6.61
Lecture	8	6.61
6 thinking hats	5	4.13
Historical stories and novels	5	4.13
Debate	4	3.30
Other	11	9.09
No idea- I don't know- No response	27	22.31

comments about topics and recognizing objectivity.

Table 8 presents the responses provided by teacher candidates to the following question: "Which methods and techniques should be used in teaching historical thinking skills?". 22.31% of social studies teacher candidates replied this question stating that they had no idea or they did not know or they simply left it unanswered. 27.22% selected question and answer, 19.00% drama and 18.18% discussion as the methods that can be used to teach historical thinking skills. The table in general shows that many candidates reported the need to use modern teaching method and techniques in teaching historical thinking skills. For instance;

TC. 3. When I become a teacher, I will definitely strive to provide my students with the skill of thinking about history instead of teaching them history per se. the methods and techniques that I will use to provide those skills will be conversation cycle, drama, discussion and 6 thinking hats.

TC.17. Historical thinking skills can be given to students through empathy because it can best be understood via empathy.

TC. 34. I believe oral history teaching will be beneficial during the acquisition of historical thinking skills. Examining photos that belong to the period, drama method, and historical filed trips can be implemented.

TC.17. "First of all past resources should be reviewed, and the root of the matter can be obtained this way. Later brainstorming can be implemented on what we could have done if we had lived at that period. Debate and discussion methods can also be used in this sense. The topic should be supported with chronological order and

concept maps s that students do not get historical facts mixed.

Oral study of history, problem solving method, sample case study, concept maps, local historical studies, conversation cycle and teaching through fames are also mentioned by students in addition to the selections provided in the table. Table 9 cites the answers provided by social studies teacher candidates to the following question: "What can be the problems related to teaching historical thinking skills?". 18.18% of social studies teacher candidates expressed that they did not know. The other answers included problems related to method (18.83%), lack or empathy (13.22%) and lack of student interest (12.39%). Therefore, teacher candidates believed that the biggest problem in providing historical thinking skills was related to the method used in teaching. For instance;

TC. 32. There are uninterested students and problems in the part of relaying our history. The topics can be relayed in a fun manner. Questions that lead to thinking can be asked instead of memorization methods and comparisons to the present can be used.

TC.30. More activities should be undertaken, lectures can be boring.

TC. 90 Problems related to the inability to take students to historical places

TC. 29. Problems related to the methods and techniques used with students

Problems related to resources and tools, time related problems and abundance of unrelated information in the curriculum were also mentioned by teacher candidates.

Table 9. Views related to problems in teaching historical thinking skills.

What can be the problems related to teaching historical thinking skills?	f	%
Problems related to method	24	19.83
Lack of empathy	16	13.22
Disinterest on the part of the students	15	12.39
Bias	14	11.57
Lack of information	9	7.43
The fact that history is an abstract lesson	9	7.43
Incompetence of teachers	7	5.78
Boring classes	7	5.78
Problems related to finding resources	5	4.13
No idea- I don't know- No response	22	18.18
Other	5	4.13
Problems related to method	24	19.83

DISCUSSION

The study undertaken to identify social studies teacher candidates' views on historical thinking skills provided the following results:

Based on study results, when teacher candidates were asked about what they understood from the term historical thinking skills, they answered that the concept was related to thinking in the lines of the circumstances and conditions of the events of a specific era. Also, considering the statements focusing on empathy and comprehension of historical events as well as the relationship between critical thinking and empathy (Ekinci and Aybek, 2010), it can be stated that the majority of teacher candidates perceived historical comprehension when historical thinking skills were in question.

The study shows that other dimensions and sub dimensions of historical thinking skills were not expressed much either. This can be explained with the fact that teacher candidates did not receive any or sufficient training, or did not read any or sufficient number of books/works about historical thinking skills as shown in Tables 3,4 and 5. The study also points to the finding that teachers were also as incompetent as teacher candidates regarding this matter (Demircioğlu, 2009). However, inability on the parts of teacher candidates to accurately express those skills does not mean full incompetence about historical thinking skills. The fact that majority of teachers mentioned thinking in lines of the circumstances of the past, realizing the change and continuity, connecting the past and present, empathizing and criticizing and questioning shows that candidates more or less know about historical thinking skills.

As can be seen from the statements provided in Table 3, the majority of teacher candidates did not receive any training on historical thinking skills.

This is also relevant for history teachers (Demircioğlu, 2009). It is also seen that teacher candidates have

demands for training in the topic. As expressed in the study of Yılmaz and Koca, (2012), this fact is consistent with incompetence on the part of universities. Hence, instructors should spend more efforts to teach historical thinking skills to teacher candidates in history, an important discipline in social studies. Presenting historical thinking skills as a separate course will be able to solve the problem to a great extent.

The majority of teacher candidates neither received any training nor attended any educational activities (conference, seminar, symposium etc.) related to historical thinking skills throughout their learning. This finding is supported by Yılmaz and Koca's (2012) findings. Educational activities such as conferences, seminars, symposiums and field trips are important opportunities for students to develop themselves. Increasing these types of activities and promoting student participating in such activities may contribute the development of historical thinking skills. As mentioned by Yeşilbursa (2008), when educational trips are undertaken in line with the goals of the course, they will allow students to act like historians and develop their skills, analysis and assessment capabilities. Also other studies (Yılmaz and Şeker, 2011; Kale, 2011; Meydan and Akkuş, 2014) also emphasize the contribution of these types of activities in historical thinking skills and awareness of history.

According to research results, the majority of the teachers did not read any books on historical thinking skills. Not only teacher candidates, but also history teachers were found not to have read about the topic as specified in Demircioğlu's (2009) study. Some of the teacher candidates mentioned reading historical novels, articles and historical texts about historical thinking skills. A small minority expressed that they read sections in textbooks related to the topic. As expressed by Şimşek (2011), historical novels cause students to like history and allow the development of historical thinking skills by providing a multi perspective on the events. Şimşek

(2006) also reported that students in social studies classes had positive attitudes and interest towards historical stories and demanded that more time should be allocated for historical stories. Hence, instructors should suggest materials for teacher candidate that can contribute to historical thinking skills and take actions to promote reading in the area to increase interest towards these types of work. Including historical novels and stories may also contribute to historical thinking skills of teacher candidates. Table 7 points that more than half of the participants mentioned thinking in line of the circumstances of the era in question and ability to emphasize as historical thinking skills. However, none of the teacher candidates were able to fully enumerate those skills. The fact that a large number of teacher candidates mentioned the skill of empathy cited among the historical comprehension skills and which should be regarded as a target for historical thinking (Güven et al., 2014: 88) may mean that historical thinking skills are considered as important in social studies teaching. A previous study by Demircioğlu (2009) identified that a large part of history teachers did not know the historical thinking skills. Also, Yılmaz and Koca's (2012) study determined that history teachers' had very low perceptions of empathy; they mixed historical empathy with other historical thinking skills and experienced misconceptions. Therefore, even partial knowledge on the part of teacher candidates can be regarded as development. History teaching devoid of historical thinking skill cannot go beyond being a boring lesson that only lists events and concepts chronologically. Therefore, training social studies teacher candidates in this area is crucial for themselves and for their future students. Hence, education faculties and instructors who train social studies teacher candidates have a lot to do. Instructors' teaching those classes by associating topics with historical thinking skills can solve the problems to a great extent.

Teacher candidates believe that historical thinking skills are required for secondary school students for effective teaching of history. Probably, what candidates mean here is historical comprehension and training individuals with those skills. Majority of teacher candidates stated that secondary school is the most appropriate period to teach historical thinking skills. Views of teacher candidates in this regard are consistent with other findings. Teaching historical thinking skills include children grades 5-12 as determined by The National Center for History in USA (URL: 2).

Teacher candidates reported that method was the biggest problem encountered in teaching historical thinking skills. When they mentioned teacher incompetence, they probably meant incompetence in using methods as well. Problems related to methods used in teaching history are at the core of student disinterest as well. As identified in the studies by Mutluer, (2013) and Bal (2011), lack of appropriate methods is a barrier for

thinking skills. Demircioğlu (2009) also regarded disinterest towards history classes and the use of memorization as barriers that faced historical thinking skills. Teacher candidates mentioned student disinterest as a problem which is also related to method issues. When classes are taught using interesting methods, students will be interested. The reason behind teacher incompetence is related to lack of effective methods and techniques. As observed in Table 9, the majority of teacher candidates support modern educational methods in teaching historical thinking skills. However, use of "I have no idea and I don't know" as response or providing no response to the question is troubling. Teacher candidates' statements regarding teaching strategies through presentation, discovery and research may mean attempts to express the need for these methods in teaching historical thinking classes.

In fact, methodological problems are among the biggest issues encountered during the teaching of any skill or topic. Several studies (Mutluer, 2013; Demircioğlu, 2009; Bal, 2011) reported that lack of appropriate methods is a crucial barrier for thinking skills. Also, Işık's (2011) study identified that use of primary resources and activity based methods developed students' historical thinking skills. Many studies stated that modern and student centered methods and techniques used in social studies or history teaching were interesting and crucial for historical thinking, critical thinking and awareness of history (Aybek, 2007; Dilek, 2011: 110; Şeker, 2010; Şimşek, 2006; Ata, 2011:115; Işık, 2011; Mutluer, 2013; Demircioğlu, 2009; Bal, 2011). Study undertaken by Narin and Aybek (2010) identified that teachers with critical thinking skills selected their methods accordingly.

Therefore, teacher candidates' knowledge about modern teaching methods and techniques will play an important role in teaching historical thinking skills. Hence, it is crucial for instructors in faculties of education to teach applied methods and techniques that can be used in history and social studies classes.

The majority of teacher candidates expressed that biases and lack of empathy were problems in teaching historical thinking skills. Empathy and ability to access history devoid of biases are included in the sub dimensions of historical thinking skills. Empathy skills are one of the most important targets for historical thinking (Güven et al., 2014: 88). Elder and Gorzycki, (2011: 2) reported that although everyone has ideas about the past, very few of them have critical thoughts about it. Individuals are under the influence of ideologies, societies and cultures when they evaluate historical events, approach history with the perspective created in their minds and observe only specific parts of the past, the parts they want to see. Cultural norms and habits are questioned rarely due to lack of empathy and biases. Getting rid of this will be possible through historical thinking skills. If teacher candidates have historical thinking skills, they will be able to train their future

students in that framework.

Results show that although social studies teacher candidates did not fully express the concept, they were aware of historical thinking skills. It was identified that the candidates were lacking in historical thinking skills but they considered those skills important and were willing to be trained on the topic. Universities and especially the faculties of education that train future teacher have important responsibilities in this regard. Providing courses on thinking skills and organizing activities (seminars, conferences, panels) in the faculty will help solve the problem. History instructors should utilize these classes as opportunities to train individuals with historical thinking skills. The classes should be taught by using modern and activity based educational methods and techniques and trips to historical places and museums should be emphasized.

Conflict of Interests

The author have not declared any conflict of interests.

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