

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
of
CONTEMPORARY
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

JCER

International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research (IJCER)

www.ijcer.net

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Selda Şan¹, Cemil Öztürk², Ahmet Katılmış³

¹Ege University,  0000 0002 8680 7491

²Marmara University,  0000 0002 2433 350X

³Marmara University,  0000 0002 5776 850X

Article History

Received: 28.08.2023

Received in revised form: 21.10.2023

Accepted: 09.12.2023

Article Type: Research Article



To cite this article:

Şan, S., Öztürk, C. & Katılmış, A. (2023). Developing political literacy of social studies teacher candidates for citizenship education. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 10(4), 930-945. <https://10.52380/ijcer.2023.10.4.548>

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Developing Political Literacy of Social Studies Teacher Candidates for Citizenship Education **

Selda Şan^{1*}, Cemil Öztürk², Ahmet Katılmış³

¹Ege University

²Marmara University

³Marmara University

Abstract

In a rapidly developing and advancing world, citizens are expected to be involved in politics and help their administrators and politicians. Although the concept of political literacy has an old history, it has become popular today. It has been included as a skill in the 2018 and 2023 social studies curricula in Türkiye. Considering the relevant national literature and the results of the needs analysis conducted within the scope of this research, it is seen that social studies teachers and teacher candidates don't know political literacy and don't have political literacy knowledge, skills, and values as necessary. They, who are expected to raise politically literate individuals, have to be politically literate citizens or teachers in order to be successful. This research, produced from a doctoral thesis, was aimed at improving the political literacy of social studies teacher candidates. So, a political literacy education program was prepared within the scope of action research, one of the qualitative research designs, and political literacy education was given to improve the political literacy of teacher candidates. After the training, which lasted about three and a half months, the effectiveness of the program in developing political literacy and the views of teacher candidates on it were tried to be revealed.

Keywords: Citizenship education, political literacy, social studies, teacher candidates

Introduction

The relationship between politics and social studies, handled with an interdisciplinary approach, is so significant that it cannot be ignored. Social studies make great use of political science in terms of raising effective citizens. According to Akhan (2013), it's a course that allows students to develop positive views of the political system, become active citizens, and gain participatory skills. Politics, with an undeniably important effect on society and the individual (Pacho, 2014), is important for the concept of citizenship. In order for individuals to participate as citizens in society, they need to have some basic knowledge (Dudley & Gitelson, 2002). However, they are expected to have skills and values while using knowledge, as well as basic knowledge. According to Tam (2016), a citizen who lacks political understanding will be much more open to malicious propaganda and provocation.

Political literacy is a type of literacy that has a very wide scope. Every subject that concerns society and citizens can be the subject of political literacy by being associated with the concept of governance. Collins (1992) stated that all literacy is political, thus demonstrating the inclusiveness of political literacy. According to Hacker (2000), it is individuals' choosing and accepting the right thing by approaching political issues objectively despite their own ideology. Kruse (2018) stated that political literacy has different meanings depending on what is meant by politics and discussed political literacy as three types of skills: 1) political literacy, which refers to the political process; 2) political literacy, which refers to political structures, institutions, and governance; and 3) policy literacy, which refers to political or political content (p. 10). It is the ability of individuals to develop their own political values and put them into practice (Brett et al., 2002). It does not only include political knowledge.

* Corresponding Author: *Selda Şan, selda.san@ege.edu.tr*

** This study was carried out from Asst. Prof. Dr. Selda Şan's PhD thesis titled "developing political literacy of social studies teacher candidates for citizenship education" under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Cemil Öztürk and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Katılmış.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that this literacy includes political skills and values as well as political knowledge (see Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998; Badlan, 2016; Chrastka, 2017; Kruse, 2018; Triwardani & Wiendijarti, 2016). Because political literacy is a way of life as well as having knowledge (Ljunggren & Unemar Öst, 2010), Political literacy is not just about political knowledge about how institutions work (Flinders, 2016) and consists of a combination of knowledge, skills, and values (Crick, 2000; Triwardani & Wiendijarti, 2016). Political literacy is the ability of individuals to be active and participate in politics using this combination (Badlan, 2016). It is basically being able to analyze and solve existing stories and problems (Douglas, 2002). Political literacy is having basic political knowledge and critical thinking skills about political processes (Selanik Ay & Yavuz, 2016). When considered in more depth as a concept, political literacy is to deal with how governance or power is used and how it should be used in every social structure where the concepts of governance and power/authority exist, and how these structures or institutions work or should work through knowledge, skills, and values (Crick & Lister, 1978; Crick & Porter, 1978). Political literacy, the cornerstone of the democratic process, enables citizens to participate in the public sphere and gain critical awareness (Badlan, 2016). It helps to understand different perspectives and eliminate prejudices by raising awareness (Douglas, 2002).

When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that there are not many studies on this concept, although the concept of political literacy is not a new concept (Huddleston & Rowe, 2006). It is understood that the existing studies are mostly theoretical studies and literature reviews. It is also seen that the first studies were mostly from Britain and were aimed at political education. Later, studies on political literacy aimed for citizenship education, and it continues today (see Crick & Lister, 1978; Crick & Porter, 1978; Minogue, 1980; Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998). Although different definitions have been given in the studies, it can be said that it is agreed that this concept is a combination of knowledge, skills, and values. Looking at the relevant studies in the international literature, it is seen that there are studies on citizenship education, political literacy and political education (Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998; Bochel, 2009; Borovoi, Patel & Vlaev, 2013; Brocklehurst, 2015; Brodie-Mckenzie, 2015; Carr & Thesee, 2018; Carrington & Short, 1987; Cassel & Lo, 1997; Collins, 1992; Crick, 2000; Crick, 1978; Crick & Lister, 1978; Crick & Porter, 1978; Davies, Mizuyama, Ikeno, Parmenter & Mori, 2013; Demaine, 2014; Douglas, 2002; Dudley & Gitelson, 2002; Espie, 1999; Head, Hill, Lockyer & Macdonald, 2015; Horvath, 2018; Hunter & Rack, 2016; Janoski & Gran, 2002; Kotze, 1989; Kruse, 2018; Lund & Carr, 2008; Maitles, 2009; Minogue, 1980; Offen, 2017; O'Toole, Marsh & Jones, 2013; Perveen & Awan, 2017; Pessima, 1997; Preira dos Santos, 2014; Preston, 1989; Rack, 2016; Tam, 2016). However, among these, it is seen that there are almost no theoretical and practical studies on teacher training. It is seen that there are very few studies on political literacy in Türkiye, and the existing ones are mostly done by social studies educators (Aslan, 2019; Demir, 2019; Faiz & Dönmez, 2016; Görmez, 2018; İnan, 2016; İnan & Tarhan, 2018; Kara & Tangülü, 2017; Kuş, 2013; Şan, 2019; Şan & Gölgesiz Gedikler, 2020; Tarhan, 2019). In 2018, "political literacy" was included as a skill for the first time in the Social Studies Curriculum (Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2018). In this context, it is important to educate politically literate social studies teachers both in order to raise good teachers as teachers and citizens. As a politically literate person, teachers can educate politically literate students easily. Kara and Tangülü (2017) and Görmez (2018) concluded that social studies programs have outcomes related to political literacy. However, it is understood from the relevant studies that social studies teacher candidates should receive political literacy education in terms of knowledge, skills, and values. Faiz and Dönmez (2016) concluded that the political literacy knowledge, skills, and affective tendencies of social studies teacher candidates are moderate. Tarhan (2015) concluded that social studies teacher candidates do not consider themselves politically literate and that the education they have received throughout their lives is not aimed at improving their political literacy. Kuş and Tarhan (2016) concluded that social studies teachers did not include policy-related issues in their lessons, although they stated that political issues are necessary and should be taught in social studies courses. Demir (2019) suggested that current political issues should be discussed and frequently included in the social studies teaching undergraduate program in order for social studies teacher candidates to become politically literate. When the related studies are examined, it is seen that they are generally aimed at determining the political literacy status and levels of teachers/pre-service teachers and getting opinions (see Akhan, 2013; Aslan (2019); Çınar (2019); Dağ & Koçer, 2019; Faiz & Dönmez, 2016; Görmez, 2018; İnan, 2016; İnan, 2019; İnan & Tarhan, 2018; Kara & Tangülü, 2017; Kuş, 2013; Kuş & Tarhan, 2016; Şan, 2019; Şan & Gölgesiz Gedikler, 2020; Tarhan, 2015; Tarhan, 2019). In addition, when the relevant national literature is examined, it is seen that the political literacy levels of social studies teacher candidates and teachers are not very good, and observed social studies teachers do not include current political issues in the classrooms (see Akhan, 2013; Faiz & Dönmez, 2016; Kuş & Tarhan, 2016).

Douglas (2002) states that it is very important to conduct studies on political literacy for teacher candidates for both citizenship education and teacher education. Because, as Brett et al. (2002) stated, social studies teachers have difficulties in preparing meaningful learning activities within the scope of political literacy. Examining the

relevant literature, it's clearly seen that there are many gaps in the field of political literacy in terms of both citizenship education and teacher training. It is clearly seen that political literacy is a fairly new concept for the Turkish education system, and studies on political literacy at all educational levels are quite limited. In 2018, the concept of political literacy was included as a skill in the Social Studies Curriculum prepared by the Ministry of National Education Board of Education and Discipline (see Ministry of Education, 2018). Social studies teachers are also expected to be politically literate in order to effectively teach children political literacy, which is a very new concept in terms of the Turkish Education System in the program. For this reason, the question titled "How can we develop political literacy, focused on citizenship education, in social studies teacher candidates?" constitutes the problem of the research. In this context, answers to the following sub-questions are sought:

1. How does political literacy education, developed with a focus on citizenship education, improve the political literacy of social studies teacher candidates?
2. What are the opinions of the social studies teacher candidates on political literacy education focused on citizenship education?

Method

This research, aiming to prepare the political literacy education program and examine the political literacy development of pre-service teachers within the scope of improving the political literacy of social studies teacher candidates, has been handled within the framework of the qualitative research paradigm. Action research, a participatory action research type aiming to implement a new approach in education, constitutes the model of this research.

Within the scope of the criterion sample, the study group of the research consisted of twenty (22) social studies teachers studying at the Ege University Faculty of Education in the 2018–2019 academic year, choosing the New Approaches in Social Studies course, studying in the second grade, and not having sufficient knowledge about political literacy. However, the data of 20 social studies teacher candidates has been used in the study since two participants don't allow their data to be used. Participants have been coded as P1, P2, P3,... P20. Information about the participants is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Information About Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Participants	Gender	Age
P 1	Female	20	P 11	Male	20
P 2	Female	20	P 12	Female	20
P 3	Female	20	P 13	Female	20
P 4	Female	20	P 14	Male	20
P 5	Female	20	P 15	Female	20
P 6	Female	20	P 16	Female	20
P 7	Male	21	P 17	Male	23
P 8	Female	20	P 18	Female	20
P 9	Female	20	P 19	Male	20
P 10	Female	20	P 20	Male	20

As seen in Table 1, the study group for the research consists of fourteen (14) female and six (6) male students within the scope of the needs analysis. Eighteen (18) of the participants were twenty (20) years old; one was twenty-one (21); and one was twenty-three (23) years old. Thus, diversity was achieved in terms of gender and age.

Within the scope of diversification (triangulation), interview, observation, student reflective diary, self-evaluation forms, researcher reflective diary, 2N forms (What did I know? - What did I learn?) and student work/activity sheets were used in the research. Expert opinions were taken for each data collection tool, and necessary corrections were made. Content analysis and descriptive analysis were used in the analysis of the data. 2N forms, individual interviews, student worksheets, and student reflective diaries were analyzed by content analysis; observation, researcher's diary, and self-evaluation forms were analyzed with descriptive analysis. A certain part of the data was analyzed by a second researcher (Dr. Between the analyses of the two researchers, Miles & Huberman's (1994, p.64) reliability formula was used. It has been concluded that the reliability of each piece of data is sufficient and high.

The research topic was determined as the first step in the research. As a second step, a literature review and needs analysis were made. As the third step, an action plan was prepared and implemented. In the fourth step, data were collected and analyzed. This process continued systematically and regularly. As the fifth step, the results were evaluated and reported. Interviews were made in the needs analysis carried out within the scope of these steps, and the 2N form “what did I know?” part was applied. A detailed conclusion was reached by scanning the relevant literature. In the needs analysis, it was seen that social studies teacher candidates have low political literacy knowledge, skills, and values; they do not know political literacy, and there is no activity or course on political literacy in the undergraduate program. As a result of the scanned literature, it was seen that there are studies showing that the situation is the same in Türkiye. After identifying the problem or subject and performing a needs analysis, political literacy dimensions were tried to be revealed for about 2 and a half years. Then, a political literacy education model was prepared in accordance with the dimensions, and the activities were presented to expert opinions. Action research steps were followed, and a 13-week action plan was created. During the political literacy training, lasting for about three and a half months, analyses were made during the process; deficiencies or problems were shared with the validity committee or advisory committee every week, and the process continued with the necessary changes. The activities carried out are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Knowledge of activities

Week	Activity name	Lesson Time	Week	Activity name	Lesson Time
1 th week	Management in the family	2	8 th week	Form of government in the world: Does monarchy or republic work the same in every country?	2
2 nd week	Management in school	2	9 th week	World Management, Refugee Issues, and Aylan Baby	4
3 rd week	Management and rights in social life: Being a student in a minibus	2	10 th week		
4 th week	Sexual abuse draft law and political participation	2	11 th week	Politicians, managers, and representatives	2
5 th week	Olive Grove Draft Law and Political Participation	2	12 th week	World leaders are discussing	2
6 th week	Is the March for Justice a right?	2	13 th week	Examining different newspapers: Political concepts and examination of them	2
7 th week	Parliamentary revitalization	2			

The same knowledge, skills, and values are tried to be developed in all of the activities in which different methods and techniques are used that center the discussion. The information desired to be developed in all activities is as follows: how the administration is, how power is used, the relationship between media and politics, knowledge of political concepts, the impact of decisions on society, and political participation and its impact. The political literacy skills that are desired to be developed in all activities are as follows: Empathy, political participation, political thinking, and using political language. The political literacy values that are desired to be developed are as follows: Tolerance, justice, giving importance to free thought.

Findings

In the thesis, the data obtained from each data collection tool was analyzed under separate headings and in accordance with the nature of action research for 13 weeks, week by week. Because the analyses are very comprehensive and long, some sample analyses obtained from data collection tools are included in this study. In order to summarize the development of political literacy, analyses for 13 weeks obtained from self-assessment forms and student reflective diaries, especially for the first and last weeks, were included.

How does political literacy education, developed with a focus on citizenship education, improve the political literacy of social studies teacher candidates?

Table 3. The domains of Political Literacy: 2N Form - What did I know?

Codes	Participants	f
Policy	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P12, P17, P20	9
Society and Individual	P3, P5, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P15, P18	9
Politics	P11, P13, P15, P16, P17	5
Education	P1, P13, P15, P16	4
Media/Press	P1, P5, P15, P20	4
Economy	P12	1
Environment	P12	1
Citizenship	P16	1
Law	P9	1

When the current knowledge of the social studies teacher candidates in the field of political literacy is examined in the 2N form, it can be seen from Table 3 that the most repeated political literacy areas by the participants are politics (f9), society and individuals (f9), and politics (f5). In addition to these, education (f4), media/press (f4), environment (f1), economy (f1), law (f1), and citizenship (f1) are also stated as domains of political literacy. K14 left this part blank.

After the training 2N form “What did I learn?” shows that participants agree on the main areas of political literacy (Table 4).

Table 4. The Domains of Political Literacy: 2N Form - What did I learn?

Codes	Participants	f
Management/Administration	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P15, P16, P18, P20	16
Society and individual	P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P9, P12, P13, P14, P15, P17, P18, P19, P20	14
Politics	P2, P4, P5, P8, P10, P11, P13, P15, P16, P17, P19	11
Media	P5, P14, P15	3

According to Table 4, after political literacy education, the fields of political literacy are stated as administration, society and individuals, politics, and media. The most repeated political literacy domains were management and administration (f16), society and individuals (f14), and policy and politics (f11), respectively.

Table 5. How Should Power Be Used?: 2N form - What did I know?

Category and code	Participants	f
<i>A democratic attitude</i>		
Should be used democratically	P2, P4, P5, P6, P10	5
Should be used for social benefit	P1, P2, P10, P20	4
Should be used away from oppression	P1, P16, P18	3
Should be used fairly/impartially	P1, P8	2
Should be used in accordance with human rights and freedoms	P1, P2	2
Should be used in accordance with the situation	P6, P9	2
Should be used as a unifying	P7	1
Should be used for the benefit of the state	P2	1
Should be in accordance with the will of the society	P12	1
Should be used in a balanced and efficient way	P13	1
Should be used in accordance with the pluralist understanding.	P15	1
Should be used with indulgence	P16	1
Should be used with justice	P18	1
Should be used by the majority	P19	1
<i>An undemocratic attitude</i>		
Should be used without being felt	P11	1
Should be used based on enforcement	P17	1
<i>Meaningless/blank</i>	P3, P14	2

Looking at Table 5, it is seen that the use of force before education is handled under two categories: democratic attitude (n16, f26) and anti-democratic attitude (f2). Two participants left blanks or used meaningless expressions.

Table 6. How Power Should Be Used?: 2N Form - What did I learn?

Codes	Participants	f
Based on justice	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9,10, P11, P12, P13, P16, P17, P20	15
Based on democracy	P1, P2, P4, P5, P8, P9, P10, P11, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19	14
Based on equality	P1, P2, P4, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11, P13, P17, P20	11
Based on social benefit	P5, P7, P9, P12, P13, P18, P19	7
Based on empathy	P4, P6, P9, P10, P12, P13	6
Based on respect	P4, P8, P10, P12, P13, P20	6
Should be out of oppression	P1, P9, P10, P15, P18	5
Based on human rights	P9, P14, P15, P20	4
Based on free thought	P8, P9, P12, P18	4
Based on love	P10, P12, P20	3

According to Table 6, after the training, the participants stated that the use of power should be based on justice (f15), democracy (f14), equality (f11), social benefit (f7), empathy (f6), respect (f6), freedom from oppression (f5), appropriate for personal rights (f4), based on the importance of free thought (f4), and love (f3). Almost all of the participants stated that power should be used according to democratic and political literacy values. It is seen that the level of knowledge has increased quite well compared to the pre-training period.

Table 7. Results and Effects of Political Participation: 2N Form - What did I know?

Category and code	Participants	f
<i>Positive results</i>		
Contributing to democracy	P7, P18	2
Reaching a wide range of different sounds to be accepted	P2, P12	2
Changing the current system	P10, P13	2
Use of force for unity	P5, P16	2
Change	P12	1
Achieving truth/equality/justice/goal	P11	1
Being an interrogator	P9	1
Changing the given political decision	P1	1
	P16	1
<i>Negative consequences</i>		
Being marked	P2, P15, P20	3
Being exclusion/rejection	P10, P13	2
Passing power to the wrong people	P3, P17	2
May cause an argument/fight	P6, P7	2
The given vote is not deserved	P8	1
<i>Meaningless / left blank</i>	P4, P14, P19, P20	4

Looking at the available knowledge on the results of political participation in Table 7, positive (f11) and negative results (f8) are grouped under 2 categories. Although each of them stated different results, it may not be said that they gave strong answers. Four of them stated that political participation has both positive and negative consequences. Contributing to democracy (f2), reaching wide areas of different voices (f2), and changing the current system (f2) are the most repeated positive results of political participation. Marking (f3), exclusion or rejection (f2), transfer of power to the wrong person by voting (f2), possible arguments or fights (f2), and undeserved votes (f1) are stated as negative consequences of political participation.

Table 8. Results of Political Participation: 2N Form - What did I learn?

Category and code	Participants	f
Positive results		
<i>Consequences for impact on politics/politicians</i>		
Withdrawal of decisions made	P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P14, P15, P16, P18, P19, P20	16
Editing/amending the decision	P1, P2, P7, P9, P16, P17, P19	7
Guiding managers to be fair	P6, P4, P7	3
Directing administrators	P9, P14, P19	3
Statement from the authorities	P2	1
Facilitating the entry into force of the decision	P19	1
Preparation of draft laws	P2	1
Being noticed by management	P12	1
<i>Consequences for impact on society</i>		
Making a voice in the media	P1, P8, P16, P18	4
Making a voice in the community	P8, P9, P12, P15	4
Providing social benefit/awareness	P12, P13, P16, P17	4
Causing social change	P3, P6, P8	3

Looking at Table 8, all participants stated that political participation had positive results after political literacy training. They stated that with political participation, the decisions taken by the politicians can be withdrawn, rearranged, or changed; new decisions can be enacted or new draft laws can be made; and those in the administration can respond to the public's reaction.

Student worksheets were evaluated with the "Political Literacy Activity Evaluation Rubric." Student studies were evaluated in terms of political literacy knowledge, skills, and values and were generally evaluated as "poor," "medium," "good," and "very good."

Table 9. Quality of student worksheets

		f
Quite good	Olive Grove Draft Law Management and Rights in Social Life Is the March for Justice a Right? Parliamentary Revitalization Management in the World World Management and Syrians Syria Issue and Debate Politicians and Managers World Leaders are Discussing I'm Looking At Different Papers	10
Good	Management at School Sexual Abuse Draft Law	2
Medium	Management in the family	1
Poor/Weak	-	

According to Table 9, the activity in the first week is moderate, the activity in the second and fourth weeks is good, and the activities in the following weeks are at a very good level. From the middle to the end of the 13th week, it is understood that the pre-service teachers are in a very good situation in terms of political literacy knowledge, skills, and values.

In the news analysis within the scope of the terrorist incidents in France and New Zealand, K6 focused on tolerance and empathy by using political thinking skills: "*Trump, thinking about this situation in line with his own interests without empathy and saying "it wouldn't be like this if they have guns" in order to contribute to his country's economy and arms sales shows that he speaks without empathy. The Prime Minister of New Zealand, on the other hand, wearing Muslim clothes, starting her speech with a hadith of our Prophet (Muhammed), and attending the Friday prayer emphasize unity and solidarity. She does this even though she is a Christian. It shows that she is on the side of the Muslims. Unity in the same body means one's pain means all of us.*"

In another student worksheet or activity, P2 evaluated the Greek deputy's speech, which contained extreme grudges and hatred towards the Turks, as follows: "He could not use his freedom of thought and expression properly. Because while expressing our thoughts, it should be within the framework of respect and tolerance, without violating the rights of others. There is no freedom of thought or expression by humiliating or insulting someone." P2 focused on tolerance, respect, human rights, and freedom of thought and expression.

In another student worksheet/activity K3, describing the relationship between media and politics with pictures, it stated that political party leaders hold the media in their hands and impose their own ideas through the media, and they do not allow the media to be free.

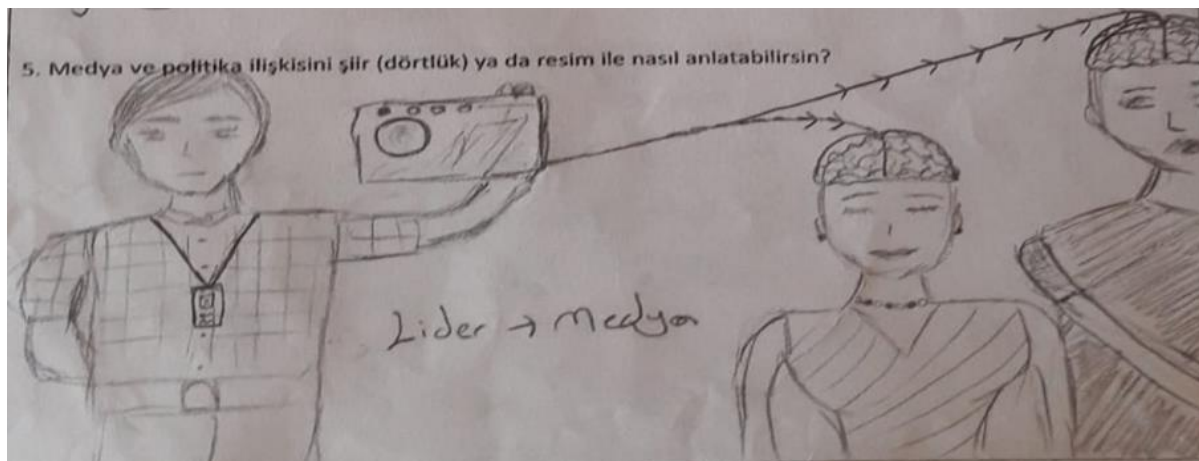


Figure 1. The relationship between media and politics according to K3 (Lider: Leader, Medya: Media)

K3: "The media has to be fair. The news presented by the media is important. So it has to be fair. When using the media, it is necessary not to criticize a side while glorifying a section. The language it uses must be soft and tolerant. (...) Certainly, the media has to be free. It also has to reflect every segment and every event."

Participants were observed during each activity week. It was observed that they hesitated in the first weeks and did not participate in the lesson. As a result of the interviews with them and the decision taken by the validity committee, the camera in the classroom was removed. Moreover, as they started to trust the researcher, it was observed that they participated in the activities, and over time, they improved their empathy, political thinking, political participation, using political language skills, and the values of tolerance, respect, justice, and free thought.

A self-assessment form was distributed to each student, and they rated items based on their own political literacy knowledge, skills, and values on a weekly basis. Since it is very comprehensive, only the self-assessments of the first and last weeks for some knowledge, skills, and values are given in Table 10.

Table 10. Self-assessments of some knowledge, skills, and values

	I learned / Yes	Partially learned / Partially yes	I didn't learn / I didn't use
Knowledge on the use of power			
1 th week	P11, P14, P16, P17, P20	P2,P3,P4,P5,P6,P7,P10,P12,P13,P15, P19,	P1, P8, P9, P18
13 th week	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20	-	-
Knowledge on the impact of participation in a decision/political issue			
1 th week	P3, P6, P11, P12, P13, P14, P20	P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P9, P10,	P3, P6, P11, P12, P13, P14, P20
13 th week	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P17, P18, P19, P20	P16	
Media and political relationship knowledge			
1 th week	P11, P17	P4, P7, P8, P10, P14, P15, P16, P18, P20	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6
13 th week	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20	-	-

Empathy skill: Looking at events from different people's perspectives		
1 th week	P2, P3, P8, P11, P14, P16, P17, P20	P5, P6, P7, P10, P12, P18
13 th week	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20	-
Political participation skills: Willingly participate in discussions		
1 th week	P3, P11, P14, P16, P17	P2, P6, P7, P10, P12, P18, P19, P20
13 th week	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20	-
Critical thinking skill: Questioning the impact of political decision on others		
1 th week	P1, P3, P11, P13, P16, P17	P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P12, P19, P20
13 th week	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20	-
The Skill of using political language: Using political concepts correctly		
1 th week	P8, P11, P17, P20	P1, P3, P6, P7, P10, P12, P13, P14, P16
13 th week	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20	-
The value of justice: Addressing injustice on a political issue		
1 th week	P3, P11, P12, P13, P14, P17	P1, P2, P5, P6, P7, P16, P20
13 th week	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20	-
The value of tolerance: Patiently listening to different opinions when discussing		
1 th week	P2, P4, P6, P10, P11, P12, P15, P16, P17, P19, P20	P1, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9, P13, P14, P18
13 th week	P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20	P5
Freedom/free thought: Care about free thought		
1 th week	P2, P3, P8, P9, P11, P12, P13, P17, P19, P20	P1, P5, P6, P7, P14, P16, P18
13 th week	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P17, P18, P19, P20	P16

When Table 10 is examined, the participants think that they have improved their political literacy in terms of knowledge, skills, and values. Although some participants consider themselves to be much better than they are, it is evident that they have improved and progressed considerably in the observations and interviews. In the worksheets, they also reflected their knowledge, skills, and values, which they developed very well, especially in the 5th week, in the activity. Student and researcher reflective diaries also show a significant improvement after the 4th and 5th weeks.

Student reflective diaries were analyzed for 13 weeks in separate weeks. When looking at the part of "What did I learn?" the first and last week, it is seen that they improved their political knowledge, skills, and values.

Table 11. The First Week: Student Reflective Diary - What did I know?

	Participants	f
<i>Knowledge</i>		
Knowledge of concepts	P5, P6, P7, P8, P12, P13, P16	7
Use of power	P3, P9, P10, P12, P16	5
Impact of the decision on people/society	P10, P15, P16	3
Democratic management of the family	P6, P7	2

Table 12. The Thirteenth Week: Student Reflective Diary - What did I learn?

	Participants	f
<i>Knowledge</i>		
Media and political relationship	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P19	13
The impact of the media on society/perception management	P2, P5, P9, P10, P15, P16	6
Use of power	P6, P10, P14, P15	4
Knowledge of concepts	P6, P14	2
Impact of political decisions on society	P14	1

When Tables 11 and 12 are examined, it is understood that their current knowledge and the number of participants learning in accordance with the subject of the week have increased.

There is a similarity between the researcher's and the student's reflective diaries. Week 1 In the researcher's reflective diary, it was noted that the participants remained passive towards the dimensions of political literacy. From the 4th and 5th weeks, more positive notes began to appear in the researcher's diaries. For example, in the 11th week, it was pleasant to have a very enjoyable, entertaining, and creative environment in the classroom due to creative drama, to use political literacy skills and values correctly, and to have high participation. It was stated that there was no unpleasant situation, but only one participant did not like writing. In the thirteenth week, the researcher noted that the class participation was very good, and advanced answers were given for the dimensions of political literacy. In the last 8 weeks, the presence of an environment compatible with political literacy skills and values and the voluntary participation of the participants without the insistence of the researcher were noted as pleasant situations.

What are the opinions of the social studies teacher candidates on political literacy education and activities developed with a focus on citizenship education?

One-on-one and face-to-face interviews were done with ten of the 20 pre-service teachers participating in political literacy training.

Table 13. Opinions of participants on their political literacy status after the political literacy training

	Participants	f
<i>Political literacy status</i>		
I am a politically literate individual	P3, P5, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P19	10
I am not politically literate	-	-
<i>The impact of political literacy education</i>		
Yes / Evolved	P3, P5, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P19	10
None / Not developed	-	-

According to Table 13, at the end of the political literacy training, all of the participants see themselves as politically literate individuals. They stated that political literacy education is effective in these situations or that it improves their political literacy status.

P16: "Until I came to this course, I wouldn't call myself racist, but when I was commenting on a subject, I used to judge without thinking about the other side, without using my empathy skill. Yes, it would even reach the trial stage. After taking this course, I see that I have become a different person. That's why I call myself politically literate."

Table 14. Opinions of social studies teacher candidates on what they learned after education

	Participants	f
Knowledge of concepts	P3, P5, P11, P12, P13, P15, P17, P19	8
Political participation/impact of it	P3, P12, P13, P14, P15, P17, P19	7
Media and political relationship	P3, P5, P12, P14, P17, P19	6
How to use power	P3, P11, P12, P15, P17	5
Political literacy values	P3, P11, P12, P15, P17	5
Political literacy skills	P3, P11, P14, P15	4

Impact of political decisions on society	P15, P12, P19	3
How decisions should be made	P15, P19	2
Political literacy and its field	P14, P17	2
How politicians/managers should be	P3, P15	2

According to Table 14, in the political literacy education course, they stated that they learned concepts such as political participation, power, administration, and democracy (f8); political participation and the effect of political participation (f7); the relationship between media and politics (f6); how power should be used (f5); political literacy values (f5); political literacy skills (f4); how to make decisions (f2); political literacy and its field (f2); and how politicians and managers should be (f2).

P14: *"I learned the relationship between media and politics; I learned what political literacy is. I never knew power. I learned how to use power. I learned how to use it. Then I learned about the fields of political literacy. I learned things like this."*

Table 15. After the training, social studies teacher candidates' gained/developed skills

	Participants	f
Empathy	P3, P5, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P19	10
Political thinking	P5, P11, P12, P13, P14, P16, P17, P19	8
Using political language	P3, P5, P11, P12, P14, P16, P17	7
Political participation	P3, P5, P12, P13, P14, P16, P19	7

According to Table 15, they gained or developed empathy (f10), political thinking (f8), using political language (f7), and political participation skills (f7) in the political literacy education course.

K3: *"I am a political participant. But not by shouting, breaking, or getting angry while doing this political participation. For example, by empathizing with the skills of political participation (III), using a softer language, or using the media, I realize political participation. I use critical language."*

Table 16. After the training, social studies teacher candidates' gained or developed values

	Participants	f
Tolerance	P3, P5, P11, P12, P14, P15, P16, P17 P19	9
Justice	P3, P5, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P19	9
freedom/free thought	P3, P5, P13, P12, P14, P17, P19	7
Respect	P3, P12, P13, P14, P16, P17, P19	7
Equality	P3, P13, P14, P15	4
Democracy	P3	1
Love	P12	1
Peace	P14	1

According to Table 16, they stated that they gained or improved the values of tolerance (f9), justice (9), freedom/free thought (f7), respect (f7), equality (f4), peace (f1), democracy (f1), and love (f1).

K16: *"Justice comes first. Because, as I said, I always made one-sided comments. I used to interpret what was right for me as always fair for me. I learned the concept of tolerance. As I just mentioned, I couldn't tolerate someone with a different opinion much more than normal. But after taking this course, when I had conversations and discussions with people with opposite views, I thought it helped me in terms of tolerance. I don't interrupt the conversation when the other person is talking about being respectful. I am waiting for him to voice his thoughts because I would like the same action to be taken against me. (...) It clearly gave me these because I think I was lacking in these issues before."*

Table 17. Likes and dislikes of social studies teacher candidates in political literacy education

	Participants	f
<i>Favorite statuses</i>		
Being informed about current events	P12, P13, P15, P16	4
Playing role of deputies	P3, P5, P16	3
Bringing/involving political participation in the course	P11, P13, P14	3
The course makes the student active	P3, P17	2
The lesson is effective/fun	P13, P19	2
Developing a sense of empathy	P3, P16	2
Having different opinions	P5, P19	2
Having activities related to student rights	P15, P16	2
Allowing conscious individuals to grow	P14	1
Expressing thoughts easily	P3	1
Supporting activities with different materials	P5	1
The activities being related to Türkiye intellectual development	P15	1
Simplifying complex events	P12	1
Writing/learning concepts by writing	P16	1
<i>Undesirable situations</i>		
Writing/filling data collection tools	P3, P11, P12, P14, P17, P19	6
Not everyone is participating in the lesson	P5, P15, P16	3

Table 17 shows that the situations that are liked in the political literacy education lesson are much greater than the ones that are disliked. It is seen that they enjoy the course in general, but they don't like the situation of writing too much for research.

All participants stated that this political literacy education has to be included in the social studies undergraduate program. The reasons are presented in Table 18.

Table 18. The necessity of including political literacy education in the social studies undergraduate program according to social studies teacher candidates

	Participants	f
To be conscious, politically literate, good, and equipped teachers and citizens	P3, P5, P11, P12, P15, P19	6
To be able to participate politically	P11, P12, P13	3
To be a citizen who believes in equality	P5, P14	2
To be inquiring citizens	P11, P19	2
Having a close relationship with social studies	P13, P16	2
To be a fair citizen	P5	1
To be an active citizen	P14	1
To be a tolerant/respectful citizen	P14	1
Being a practical/student-centered course	P17	1

In Table 18, it's seen that Political Literacy Education has to be included in the social studies undergraduate program to be politically literate citizens and teachers (f6) and to be able to participate politically (f3). Moreover, it is important to educate citizens who believe in equality, think critically, and are active and fair.

Table 19. The importance of involving media in political literacy education according to social studies teacher candidates

	Participants	f
Analyzing the media with political thinking	P3, P13, P15, P16, P17, P19	6
Media conveying the policy to the public	P11, P12, P13, P17, P19	5
Political participation through social media/media	P12, P13, P16	3
Media as a communication tool between the government and the public	P5	1

According to social studies teacher candidates, media should be included in political literacy education because, by analyzing the media with political thinking (f6), the media conveys the policy to the public.

Table 20. Use of different methods and techniques in political literacy education according to social studies teacher candidates

	Participants	f
Those who find it positive/effective	P3, P5, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P19	10
Those who find it negative/ineffective	-	-

As can be seen in Table 20, social studies teacher candidates found it positive or effective to use different methods and techniques such as question-answer debate, parliamentary debate, opposite panel, brainstorming, drama, and the six-hat thinking technique within the scope of political literacy education.

Results and Discussion

In this study, it has been concluded that social studies teacher candidates have a very significant improvement in political literacy knowledge, skills, and values, and they are politically literate at a good level after Political Literacy Education (POLOKE). However, Faiz and Dönmez (2016) concluded that the political literacy knowledge, skills, and affective tendencies of social studies teacher candidates are moderate. Hunter and Rack (2016) concluded that young people do not have political literacy skills. Tarhan (2015) stated that the education that pre-service teachers received throughout their lives was not effective in making them politically literate, and they did not see themselves as politically literate individuals. However, in this study, it has been concluded that social studies teacher candidates see themselves as politically literate individuals after POLOKE.

In the study, it was concluded that social studies teacher candidates have positive views about POLOKE and that this education is important in social studies teaching and teacher education. According to them, political literacy is very important for both citizenship education and teacher education in order to raise effective, active, and well-equipped teachers or citizens. Douglas (2002) also finds it quite important to conduct studies on political literacy in the fields of citizenship education and teacher education. Löfström, Virta, and Van den Berg (2010) defined political literacy as a form of literacy that is within the scope of social studies. For this reason, it has come to the conclusion that political literacy and politics should be included in social studies aimed at citizenship education. Akhan (2011) also concluded that politics is important in social studies and should be known by social studies teacher candidates.

In political literacy education, using different methods, techniques, and activities, putting the student at the center, including active participation and focusing on discussion, is seen as positive and effective by pre-service teachers. The use of different methods and techniques based on discussion makes the lesson fun. According to Douglas (2022), some citizenship educators have stated that the civics lesson can be knowledge-based and even boring. So Douglas (2002) states that this situation can be eliminated with the inclusion of political literacy in the program.

Recommendations

It is important to increase studies on political literacy, a very new concept in Turkey. This research, carried out within the scope of Social Studies teacher education, can be carried out with primary and secondary school students in the social studies course.

This research was carried out within the scope of Social Studies teacher education, and it was concluded that teacher candidates improved their political literacy. With the aim of citizenship education in education faculties, this research can also be carried out in other teacher education undergraduate programs.

In research on political literacy, it is recommended not to use the camera because it prevents participation.

It is recommended to create discussion environments in the classroom and to make the participants active by using different methods and techniques based on discussion.

Political literacy should be included as an elective course in the Social Studies Teacher Education program, or it is suggested that political literacy activities should be included in courses such as Citizenship, New Approaches in Social Studies, and Social Studies Teaching.

Studies and in-service trainings related to political literacy education for social studies teachers can be carried out by cooperating with Social Studies field experts who do adequate studies on political literacy.

Acknowledgements or Notes

This study was carried out from Asst. Prof. Dr. Selda Şan's PhD thesis titled "developing political literacy of social studies teacher candidates for citizenship education" under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Cemil Öztürk and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Katılmış.

Author (s) Contribution Rate

First author's contribution rate: 50%, second author's contribution rate: 30%, third author's contribution rate: 20%.

Conflicts of Interest

There aren't any potential conflicts of interest.

Ethical Approval (Only for necessary papers)

Research permission (Date: 19/02/2019; Number: 62088136-302.99) was obtained from Ege University for this research.

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