Inquiry Based Learning as A Recommended Approach for Controversial Historical Issues Teaching. An Action Research with Pre-Service Teachers in Greece

Lampros Papadimas¹ Alexandra Stavrianoudaki² Antonis Smyrnaios³
University of Thessaly/ Department of Primary Education

ABSTRACT
Inquiry-based learning (IBL) has been an effective method for increasing students’ understanding of difficult historical topics like controversial historical issues (C.H.I.). The current action research aims to produce a theoretical educational framework/model that -based on IBL- could support pre-service teachers to be engaged in controversial issues activities and gradually feel confident enough to enhance these topics in their History lesson. The paradigm of “Occupation–Resistance–Civil War in Greece” (and specifically in Magnesia district) has been selected since it is considered as a highly controversial historic field. Fourteen pre-service teachers have been selected and involved in the study. Qualitative research methods, such as semi-structured interviews and participative observation, were used to capture the transformation of their beliefs and their perceived sufficiency to adopt IBL as a teaching method to teach C.H.I. The findings showed participants reformed historical habits of mind and their views about History Teaching. They also develop a wide repertoire of IBL activities and a deeper understanding of themselves in different facilitating roles/functions. The study concludes that this kind of pre-service teacher training can be a suitable method of boosting C.H.I. teaching and overcoming perceived obstacles to enhance them in the classroom. This research is co- financed by Greece and the European Union (European Social Fund- ESF) through the Operational Programme «Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014- 2020» in the context of the project “Inquiry Based Learning as a recommended approach for controversial historical issues teaching. Occupation, Resistance and Civil War in Magnesia. Action research with pre-service teachers of Department of Primary Education in the University of Thessaly” (MIS 5052288).

Keywords: Inquiry-based learning; Controversial Historical issues; Occupation; Resistance; Civil War.