

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

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ABSTRACT

The use of inquiry-based learning (IBL) is encouraged in History learning, as it has been shown to be an effective method for increasing students' understanding of difficult historical topics like controversial historical issues (C.H.I.). Nevertheless, neither IBL is often used in classrooms by teachers, neither C.H.I. are usually been approached. Taking into consideration this problematic situation (and the absence of controversial issues in Greek school historiography), a pre-service teacher training History-Lab designed in order to enable participants experience IBL as an appropriate approach to teach controversial history issues. Specifically, the current action research aims to produce a theoretical educational framework/model that supports 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 students' beliefs' transformation and their perceived sufficiency to adopt IBL as a teaching method to teach C.H.I. Data were analysed with thematic analysis procedures. The findings showed that participants reformed historical habits of mind as well as 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 for enhancing them in the classroom.

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