

**Use of Current Events in Teacher Education**

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**Abstract:**

The aim of the research is to investigate preservice teachers' views about the inclusion of current events into teaching plans in the social studies teaching course included in an undergraduate elementary education program. The participants of the study were 53 preservice teachers in the social studies teaching course in the third year of the elementary education program. As a data collection tool, the opinion form about current events with nine open-ended questions was used. The study demonstrated that some preservice teachers who had not used current events before, thought the use of current events was beneficial in many areas from skill development to awareness development, and that appropriate topics included political, social, and economic topics, historical and military developments. The results showed that the most appropriate level for the use of current events is third and fourth grade, and the participants considered addressing current events at the beginning of lessons. The study also demonstrated the importance of the use of current events in teacher education for raising active democratic citizens.

**Key words:** civic engagement, current events, social studies, teacher education

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### **Introduction**

The duty of democratic and effective citizenship is a difficult process requiring active participation by individuals (Worku, 2018). An educated population in relation to political and social topics is a basic component of this process; however, the citizenship knowledge levels and civic engagement rates of young adults are reducing every day (Van Camp & Baugh, 2016). Research about the electorate behavior of young people in the U.S., Europe, and Canada show that there are reductions in interest in politics among young people at increasing rates (Bristow, 2004; Milan, 2005). Other research states that there was a continuous fall in voting participation among young adults from 18-29 years of age in the U.S. from 1972 to 2014 (Center for Information on Civic Learning). In Turkey, a survey study of university students identified that 79% of young adults stated that they are not interest in politics (Çavuşoğlu & Pekkaya, 2016). As the 18th-century philosopher Rousseau proposed, civic apathy may result in the loss of democracy and the moral and social collapse of states (Coley & Sum, 2012).

The decrease in civic participation has been reduced to the smallest degree due to the 20th century model of representative democracy (Akin et al., 2016). In modern societies, civic participation should not be limited to voting conduct, and other civic engagement activities need to be encouraged (Doğanay et al., 2007). True civic engagement goes beyond apolitical citizen interaction and actively encourages ways of democratic skill-building.

University students should be prepared to be active citizens, but as a matter of fact, universities do not practice the idea of civic engagement in their environments at the expected level (Smith & Fritschler, 2009). There is empirical evidence that higher education influences the political participation of students (Finley, 2011). On the other hand, individual student participation has not been seen enough in recent years, as it does not guarantee the institution's dedication to civic engagement (Akin et al., 2016).

Studies have shown that the levels of political participation among young people are much lower than ideal (Downs, 2012; Sloam, 2014). Çavuşoğlu and Pekkaya (2016) confirmed that the situation is the same in Turkey. The International Youth Foundation (2017) also stated that Turkey has a lower level civic participation. The acquisition of civic engagement for teacher candidates through universities emerges as an important issue at this time. Including the use of current events in educational environments is one of these mechanisms.

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### **Literature Review**

The use of current events in education, meaning integration of important events affecting society in the recent period, has a history of nearly 100 years (Atkinson, 1903). In the literature, there is clear consensus about the importance of using current events in lessons, with researchers stubbornly emphasizing the importance of the use of current events in citizenship education (Morrison, 2015).

Following and analyzing current events is one of the most important elements for the development of upper-level thinking skills at the local and sometimes global level. The ability to accurately read current events is required for everyone in society to have high conceptual levels related to important local, regional, national, and international events (Ediger, 2001). Although it is said that perceptually current events may appear to be topics of interest to more mature students and adults (Haas & Laughlin, 2000), findings obtained by McCullough (2006) show a connection between current events and student participation.

In order to use current events in education, a precondition is that there are teachers fully trained in this who have adopted the use of current events. Current events may be used by teachers for analysis and interpretation of news as reported in the media and may be used as tools for achieving the curriculum targets (Martorella, 2001). Current events may be used in teaching by articulating them to the curriculum. Research in the U.S. showed that a curriculum designed to include newspapers in lesson plans was successful in increasing student interest in current events (Holt, 1990). Research based on activities where students regularly recorded current events in diaries stated that the majority of students very much enjoyed current event analysis (Bahmani, 2016); the reason may be that when students share what they have learned about current events and analyze these events with their classmates, it significantly contributes to learning by involving productive and developmental discussions (Hughes et al., 1997).

### **Current Events in Citizenship Education and Social Studies**

When the features of current event use are investigated, this method is related most to citizenship education, while citizenship education is given within the scope of the social studies lesson in a general sense. One of the general aims of social studies lessons is to cultivate citizens who inquire and question and have adopted universal values (Hablemitoğlu & Özmete, 2012). Social studies lessons use current events to understand the background of contemporary social

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problems (Pomykalski, 2015). Activities that use current events in social studies lessons will ensure that topics are concretized for students and contribute to permanent learning. Research findings by Baugh and Van Camp (2015) showed that increases were experienced in the citizenship information perceived by students and that they paid more attention to social topics as a result of current event use.

Social studies teachers, responsible for raising students conscious of and sensitive to current events, use different resources in different periods and must bring current events to the classroom using a variety of methods and techniques (Deveci, 2007). Literature screening did not encounter any studies performed related to the application of current events within the scope of the social studies teaching lesson. From this aspect, the research was constructed as an application and it is considered that it will contribute to the literature in the sense of assessing opinions related to this implementation. In line with this, to cultivate qualified teachers at the expected level, it appears important to perform studies analyzing participant opinions related to current event implementation.

The purpose of this study is to obtain student opinions about the use of current events integrated into the curriculum in one of the elementary education undergraduate program lessons of social studies teaching. For this reason, the main question of this research is: "What are the opinions of third-year preservice teachers in the elementary education department regarding the use of current events applied in the social studies teaching lesson?"

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

This research was completed within the framework of qualitative research methods. Qualitative research involves using explanatory and inductive methods with the aim of revealing meaning from the perspective of participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In line with the aim of the research, the phenomenology pattern from qualitative research patterns was chosen to reveal opinions of preservice teachers regarding the use of current events in the social studies teaching lesson.

### **Study Group**

The research used the targeted sampling method, in which the researcher uses their own judgement based on data obtained about the topic to choose the study group. Thus, the most appropriate participants at the point of reflecting the aims of the research are included in the

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sample (Balci, 2018). Participants in the study comprised a total of 53 preservice teachers taking the social studies teaching lesson in their third year in the Elementary Education Department in the spring semester of the 2018-2019 academic year. Participants were informed about the research in the first lesson and signed informed voluntary participation consent forms. Participation was fully voluntary and all students were guaranteed that the implementation would have no effect on their grades. In line with this, all students who registered for the lesson accepted participation in the study.

The participants were registered at the university by a central examination and placement system in Turkey. The vast majority of teachers were ages 20-21, graduated from public high schools before coming to the university, and came from middle-income families. Most of them aimed to be appointed as teachers in primary schools in different parts of the country, and a small number targeted different business sectors after graduation. The participants were suitable to the nature of the study on the use of current events.

### **Research Procedure Stages**

In this research, permission was granted by the social science and humanities research ethics committee of the university connected to the researchers. The researchers constructed the study based on additional teaching, the first current event teaching method. According to this method, current events were added to the curriculum for the social studies teaching lesson where the implementation would be performed. Without requiring resources from students, each week they were requested to attend lessons monitoring current events occurring during that week. Each week at the start of lessons, students were given five questions about random topics determined by the lecturer. Responses were collected and recorded by the lecturer.

### **Data Collection Tools**

The data collection form used in the study was prepared by the researcher. The “current event use opinion form” comprising nine open-ended questions was used as a data collection device. A draft form comprising 12 questions was investigated by three experts separate from the research and the form was revised to its final version in line with recommendations. Questions on this form were prepared with the aim of reflecting and making assessments about the use of current events implemented in the initial stages of each lesson during the spring semester.

### **Analysis of Data**

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Data obtained in the research were analyzed with the content analysis method. The procedure stages for content analysis in qualitative research are represented by preparation and organization of data, coding of data, reduction to themes associated with codes, presentation of findings, and interpretation (Creswell, 2012). A code in qualitative research is mainly a word or short expression assigned as an attribute that summarizes, is noteworthy, gist-catching, and/or stimulating for a section of the language-based or visual data (Saldaña, 2016). This procedure was followed by the researcher in the data analysis process. In the data preparation stage, the opinion forms collected from participants were investigated and classified by three expert lecturers; each lecturer analyzed the data at different times using the MaxQDA 2020 qualitative data analysis program. Themes were initially determined according to question, with the themes and codes belonging to each question analyzed and interpreted in a suitable way for the aims of the research. Sample statements presented in the findings are given using the PT (preservice teacher) nickname and numbers.









Different methods were used with the aim of ensuring validity and reliability for the data obtained in the research. Researcher reliability was used to ensure reliability of content analysis in the study. For this reason, all data were coded independently by the researchers and the codes were compared. In this way, the reliability value was found to be nearly 91%. Validity in qualitative research may be provided by data diversity, detailed explanation of the study group features, detailed reporting of data, and quoting from the data (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). For this reason, the student statements on which codes are based, code network, code matrix, and frequency of statements by preservice teachers are presented as figures. Additionally, data codes are openly and clearly stated during the presentation of findings and supported by direct quotations in an attempt to increase the validity and reliability of the study.

### **Findings**

Findings obtained from semi-structured interviews using previously determined codes were analyzed at the theme, code, and subcode level and presented visually. In order to better understand the figures presenting the research findings, explanations of visual symbols are given in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Expressions used for data visualization*

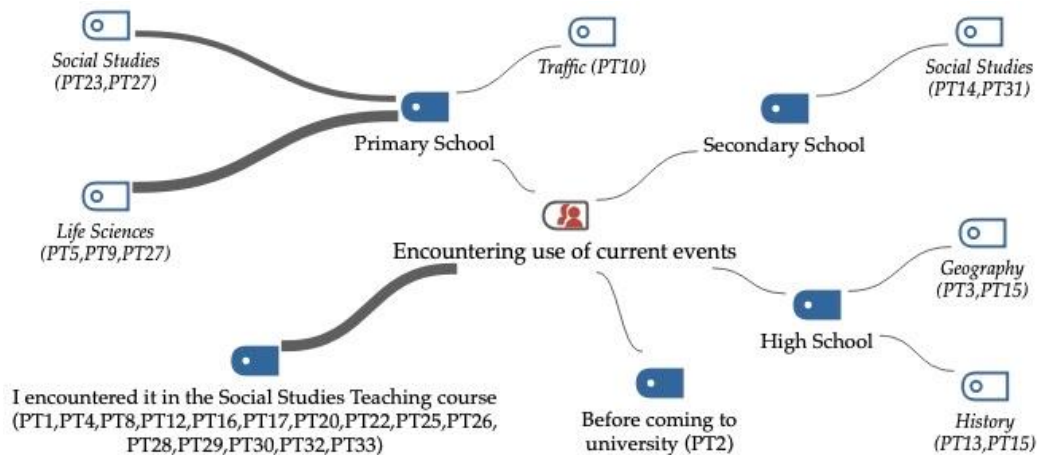
 Theme	Symbol indicating significant whole created by categories	 Subcode	Symbol indicating participant statements
 Category	Symbol indicating structures created by gathering codes		Symbol indicating formation of category, code, or subcodes together (strong)
 Code	Symbol indicating participant opinions comprising subcodes alone or combined		Symbol indicating formation of category, code, or subcodes together (weak)
 Code with a subcode	Symbol for codes with subcodes		Symbol indicating category or code with subcodes

### Encountering Use of Current Events

Preservice teachers were asked whether or not they had encountered the use of current events in lessons during their educational lives and, if they had, at which class level they had encountered current event use. The data analyzed using the Max-Map co-occurrence model are given in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Opinions about encountering the use of current events



The majority of preservice teachers encountered current event use for the first time within the scope of the implementation, while others had encountered current event use at different educational levels. Based on the opinions of the preservice teachers, the use of current events was generally applied in social studies lessons. For example, sample statements from preservice teachers who encountered current event use in life science, social studies, and traffic lessons at the primary school level are as follows:

I was introduced to current event use in lessons in primary school life science lessons. Our teacher gave the example of the 17 August 1999 earthquake, which had occurred recently as an example of an earthquake in the topic of natural disasters in the life science lesson. Later, we benefitted from current events in social studies lessons. (PT5)

The statements of preservice teachers who encountered current event use in social studies lessons only at the middle school level included:

Yes, I encountered this topic in my previous experience. I encountered it in an 8th grade social studies lesson and now within the scope of the social studies teaching lesson in university. (PT31)

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Preservice teachers stated that they encountered the use of current events in history and geography lessons at the high school level. An example statement for this topic includes:

I encountered it about earthquakes in geography lessons in high school. The Van earthquake occurred in that period, and I was studying in Van. In this way, the current event was transferred to the lesson, and we studied the topic of earthquakes. (PT3)

In addition to preservice teachers stating that they had encountered the use of current events in history lessons at the university education level (PT1), one preservice teacher stated the opinion before coming to university (PT2).

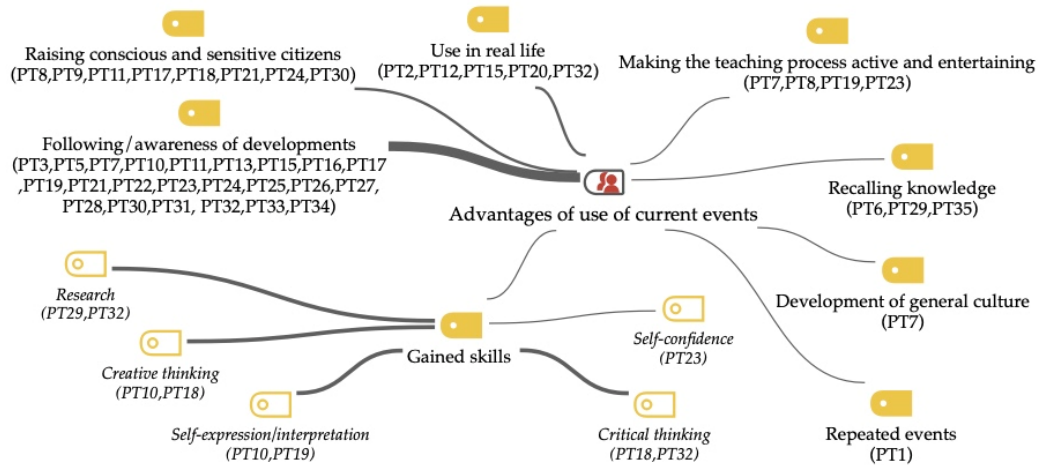
Participants mainly stated that they encountered the use of current events for the first time in the social studies teaching lesson within the scope of the research. A preservice teacher used the following statement in relation to this situation: "I encountered it in a real sense in university. In fact, we can say I saw it in the social studies teaching lesson" (PT33). However, preservice teachers stated that they remembered the use of events on the agenda, natural events, newspaper and news, etc., in relation to the use of current events in lessons.

### **Advantages of Use of Current Events**

During interviews, preservice teachers were asked a question related to the advantages of current event use in lessons. Data obtained about opinions were analyzed, and the Max-Maps co-occurrence model is given in Figure 2.

### **Figure 2**

*Opinions about advantages of current event use*



The preservice teachers stated that there were advantages for topics like following developments/creating awareness mainly, followed by acquiring skills, raising conscious and sensitive citizens, use in real life, making the teaching process active and entertaining, recalling knowledge, development of general culture and repeated events, etc. Due to the use of current events, preservice teachers began to follow national and world news every day, as well as news related to the economy, politics, and general topics. They stated that following the agenda developed general culture and, additionally, the use of current events made lessons more active and entertaining. A sample statement from a participant about these topics is as follows: “It ensured we were aware of the agenda. It increased our knowledge. It ensured lessons were more entertaining. Both the lecturer and student were active” (PT7).

Preservice teachers also stated that they gained skills like researching, creative thinking, self-expression/interpretation, critical thinking, and self-confidence with the process of using current events. A sample statement from a preservice teacher is as follows: “I think it definitely increased permanence in memory. The effect of the topic was increased and the student’s desire to research and curiosity was stimulated” (PT29). Participants generally stated that they gained a variety of skills such as more closely following the agenda in the country and the world, being a conscious citizen, and awareness of events.

### Limitations of Use of Current Events

The third theme within the scope of the research obtained opinions of preservice teachers regarding limitations to the use of current events. Data were analyzed, and the Max-Maps co-occurrence model is given in Figure 3.

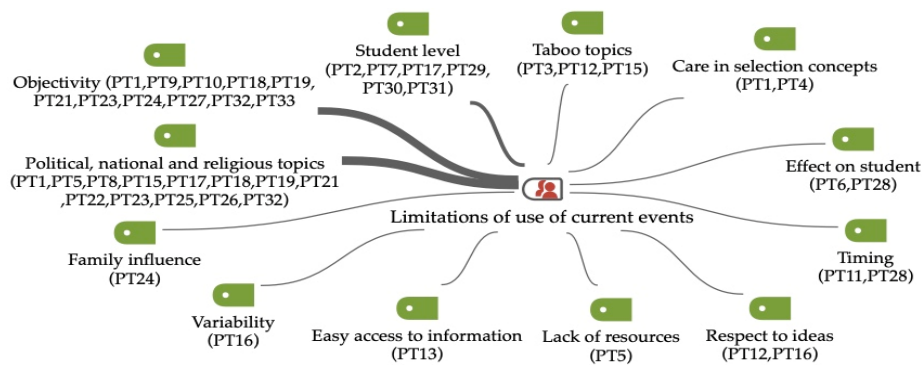
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Figure 3

*Opinions about limitations of use of current events*



The probable topics causing the greatest problems in using current events in Turkey were political, religious, and national topics. In any community, there may be individuals with different political opinions, nationalities, beliefs, and belonging to different sects within the same faith. In schools, which are organizations reflecting the structure of society in large part, teachers should be objective to contribute to individual development in a positive sense. When using current events, care should be taken about the cultural, political, and belief structures of the students, the location of employment, and the use of some concepts when selecting topics. An opinion of a preservice teacher about this topic is as follows:

It is necessary to take care with topics with political content. Though our aim is to communicate current events with these types of topics, people may speak their own interpretations when talking. It is necessary to be objective about every topic; however, people may make inferences even from a single word. When giving current events care, should be taken with the sentences used. (PT1)

In addition to this situation, topics selected as current events and the duration spent should be meaningful for students and they should respond. Another element encountered requiring attention from the educator is the degree to which these current events affect the student. A preservice teacher made the following statement about this situation:

Firstly, care should be taken of timing, and the content of the topic in the current event encountered will be important. The opinions of students about the situation should be considered. (PT28)

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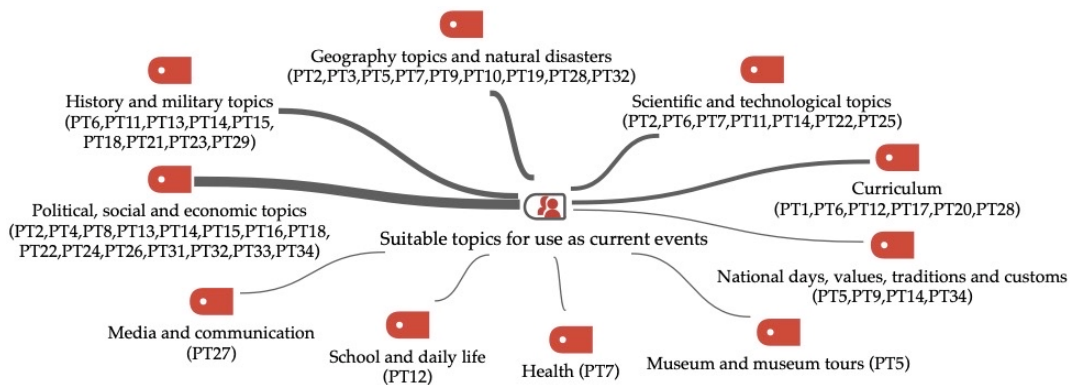
General limitations emerging about the topic of using current events can be said to be the selection of current event topics by teachers for lessons, the duration spent on the topic, use of concepts, attention to the students' interpretation and negative effects on students, the teacher knowing the cultural structure of their location of employment, etc.

### Suitable Topics for Use as Current Events

Opinions of preservice teachers about which topics are more suitable for use as current events were analyzed. The Max-Maps co-occurrence model is given in Figure 4.

Figure 4

*Opinions about topics suitable for use as current events*



It appears that mainly topics about politics, economy, history, and military developments were observed. Based on the strategic location of Turkey, it is natural that preservice teachers want to use these topics as current events. In the opinion of a preservice teacher about topics suitable for current event use:

Without regard to different topics, politics, history, etc., all topics are currently important. For example, the dollar/Euro exchange rate is continuously changing. Just as we can't get it by saying two years ago it was 2.5 lira, two years ago we may not have had the same relationship with our allies. We should know this as a duty of citizenship. (PT13)

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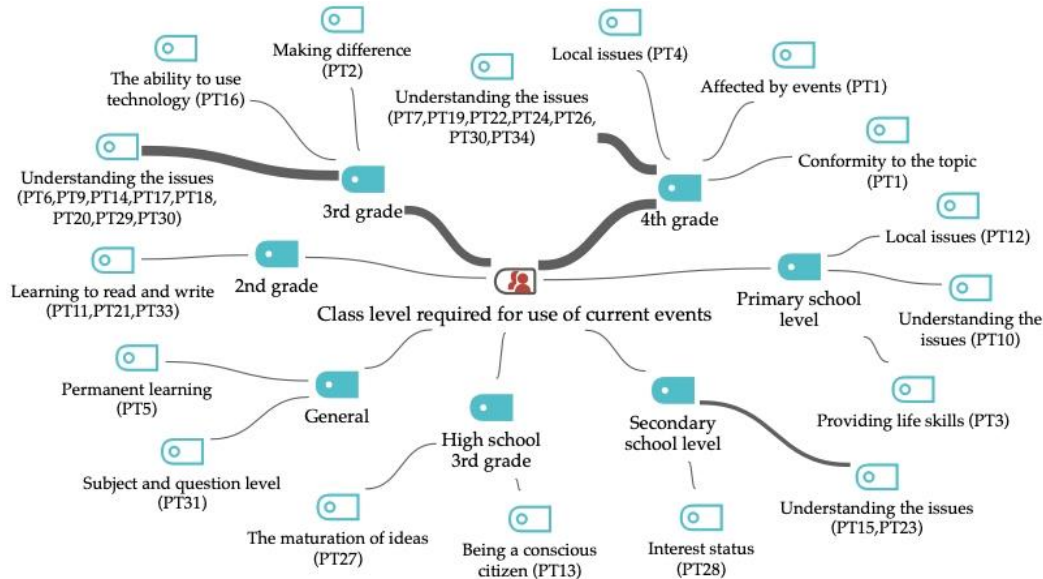
Turkey is a country where natural disasters are frequently experienced, led by earthquakes, landslides, floods, erosion, etc. During the teaching process, teachers frequently teach natural disaster topics. In addition to natural disasters, national days, and holidays, scientific and technological developments in our country and the world can be said to be topics used as current events not just by teachers in the social science area but by other branch teachers. An opinion of a preservice teacher about this situation is as follows: "I think the use of political, economic and geographical changes in our country and developing technology in the world are important" (PT2). In line with the opinions of preservice teachers, apart from these topics for use as current events, museums and museum trips, health, school and daily life, media, communication, and news topics were chosen for use less often.

### Class Level Required for Use of Current Events

Preservice teacher opinions about which class level is most appropriate for the use of current events were analyzed. The Max-Maps co-occurrence model is given in Figure 5.

Figure 5.

*Opinions about appropriate class level for use of current events*



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Preservice teachers participating in the research expressed a large variety of opinions about the reasons for using current events according to class level. Preservice teachers who thought that current events could begin to be used in second grade accepted that students' reading and writing was a preparation for learning; however, some preservice teachers stated that this was not sufficient. In the opinion of a preservice teacher: "It will be good after they learn to read and write in first grade. Because both reading-writing will progress, and they will know the world is not just their neighborhood" (PT33).

With the thought that students who knew how to read and write could conceptualize some topics, they stated that the use of current events would be more appropriate in the third- and fourth-grade level. Additionally, they emphasized that students should be able to use technology and follow the agenda. In the opinion of a preservice teacher:

I think current events are more suitable for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Because children in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade may not understand. Because children in that period think concretely, they cannot think abstractly and may not be able to understand. (PT7)

There were participants stating the need to apply current events at the primary school level in a general sense due to reasons such as creating awareness among students from a young age and gaining basic life skills, choosing local topics in line with the proximity to distance principle. The opinion of a preservice teacher is as follows:

I think it should be applied from 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. We give more importance to reading and writing in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. They acquire basic skills and additionally life skills, in other words critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, and analytic thinking skills are skills that should be given with basic skills. These skills can be acquired with current events. For this reason, I think it can begin in at least the second semester of 1<sup>st</sup> grade. (PT3)

On the other hand, some preservice teachers thought it was appropriate to use current events at the middle school level based on the idea that students at that level may be able to conceptualize some topics better than at the primary school level. In the opinion of a preservice teacher:

In middle school, it will be right to apply current events in an appropriate way for that level. Primary school children may have difficulty with perception. It's not appropriate for the age level. They may not be able to give meaning to events. (PT15)

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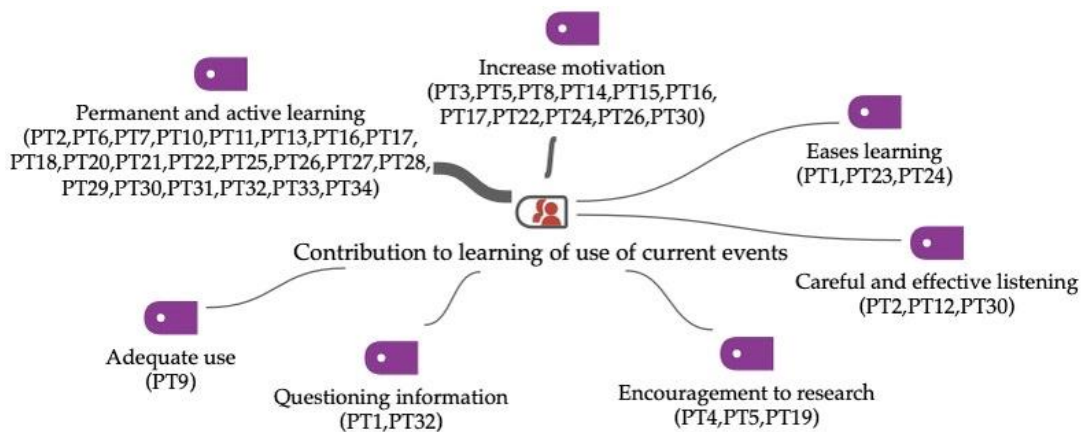
As class level increases, it was observed that the reason for using current events changed. Preservice teachers stated that the ideas of students mature and that they are on the way to becoming more conscious citizens. It appeared that the number of preservice teachers stating that current events should be used in general without mentioning class level was low.

### Contribution of Use of Current Events to Learning

The opinions of preservice teachers about the contribution of the use of current events to learning were analyzed. The Max-Maps co-occurrence model is given in Figure 6.

Figure 6

*Opinions about contribution of use of current events to learning*



The preservice teachers participating in the research mainly adopted views that the use of current events ensured permanent and active learning by students and increased motivation. Fewer preservice teachers appeared to accept that it eased student learning, that they listened more carefully and effectively in lessons, and that it encouraged questioning of information and research. The opinion of a preservice teacher about this topic is as follows: “As it will ensure learning is more permanent, it will positively affect student success in lessons and thus increase their interest in the lesson” (PT16).

### Thoughts About the Use of Current Events in the Profession

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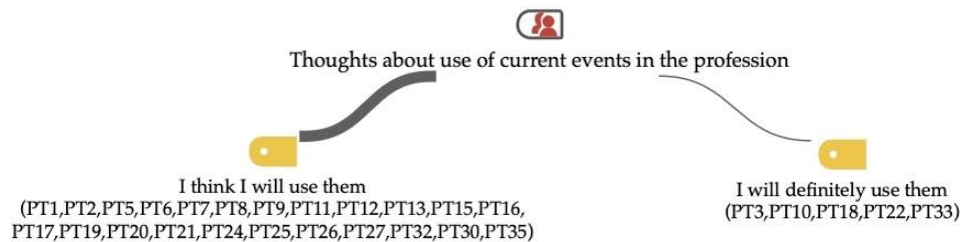
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Preservice teacher opinions about using current events when they start in the profession were analyzed. The Max-Maps co-occurrence model is given in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

*Opinions about the use of current events in the profession*



Nearly all preservice teachers thought that they would use current events in lessons according to class level when they began teaching. Most of the preservice teachers thought that they would use current events, while some preservice teachers stated they would definitely use current events. The opinions of preservice teachers in relation to this topic are given below: “When I am a teacher, I think I will use current events in the name of raising good citizens who are interested in the country’s problems” [I think I will use them] (PT5).

The use of current events will ensure the child is aware of the world they live in, criticize and question by seeing things from different channels, and differentiate right and wrong on their own. I definitely think I will use them. [I will definitely use them] (PT18)

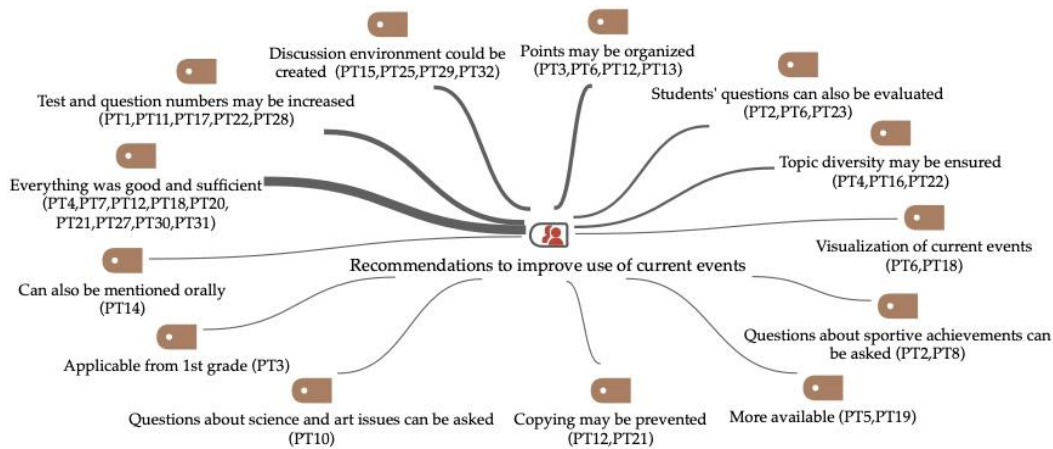
### **Recommendations to Improve Use of Current Events**

The opinions of preservice teachers about recommendations to improve the use of current events were analyzed. The Max-Maps co-occurrence model is given in Figure 8.

**Figure 8**

*Opinions about improving use of current events*





Most preservice teachers stated that they were satisfied with the implementation. Some preservice teachers gave recommendations to improve the implementation. These included recommendations like increasing the current event test and question numbers used in the implementation, creating a discussion environment, arranging points, assessing student questions, ensuring a diversity of topics, preventing copying, and using the implementation more. Based on the findings obtained, preservice teachers can be said to have found the current event implementation beneficial. According to three preservice teachers:

I think it was applied as it should be. Tests were given and answers and topics were discussed. Perhaps noteworthy images related to the topics could be shown. [Everything was good and sufficient, visualization of current events] (PT18)

Current events could be brought to class and made a topic of discussion among students. [discussion environment could be created] (PT25)

I would increase the number of questions. I would mention more different topics. [test and question numbers may be increased, topic diversity may be ensured] (PT22)

### Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The research findings revealed that some preservice teachers had not encountered current events before. Preservice teachers who had encountered the topic had seen it during life science, social studies, and traffic lessons at the primary school level, in social studies lessons at the middle school level, in history and geography lessons in high school, and in history lessons and in the social studies teaching lesson within the scope of this research in university. Research about students encountering current events in lessons revealed that more than half of middle school

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and high school students (Anderman & Johnston, 1994) and nearly half of students from 6th to 12th grade (Chapman, Nolin, & Kline, 1997) had encountered current events use. In relation to the lessons where current events were used, in this research it was concluded that they were mainly encountered in social studies and other identity-determining lessons. Bahmani (2016) proposed that the use of current events may be implemented in all lessons and areas; however, it should be especially used in economy lessons. Deveci (2007) and Dinç and Acun (2017) stated that current event use could be implemented in social studies lessons, while Değirmenci and İlter (2017) said that it may be applied in geography lessons. The findings obtained in this research largely overlap with the literature findings in this sense. However, research about science (Kadioğlu, 1996) and sport science teaching (Oregon et al., 2019) is important in terms of showing the use of current events in these areas.

Among the results of this research in relation to the benefits of current event use, the greatest developments included elements like following/creating awareness, followed by acquiring skills, raising conscious and sensitive citizens, connections with real life, making the teaching process active and entertaining, recall of information, development of general culture and repeated events, etc. Similar to these results, teachers stated that it prepared children for life and cultivated effective citizens who were sensitive to their surroundings and could make decisions and create connections between the past and present in terms of the benefits of current topics (Memişoğlu & Güçin, 2017). In addition to this, the use of current events is known to create curiosity among students (Rose, 2009), is seen as an enjoyable learning path (Arın & Deveci, 2008), increases interest in social topics (Baugh & Van Camp, 2015), activates learning experiences in university students (Grise-Owens, Valade, & Cambron, 2010), and supports teaching and learning outcomes (Bahmani, 2016).

Similar results were concluded in this research within the scope of contribution to learning with the benefits of current event use. Within the skill acquirement subtheme, gaining skills like decision-making, critical thinking, and research were stated by participants as both a benefit and contribution to learning. Additionally, it was emphasized that current events contributed to learning due to the effects of easing learning for students, teaching them to listen more carefully and effectively in lessons, encouraging them to question information and research, and increasing motivation ensuring permanent and active learning. It is necessary to use current events in lessons to develop thinking and decision-making skills (Deveci, 2005), increase academic success (Arın & Deveci, 2008), and develop critical thinking (Bahmani, 2016; Van Camp & Baugh, 2016).

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The results of this research observed that most topics suitable for use as current events were political, of close interest to society, economy, history and military developments, etc. Along with this, political, religious, and national topics were stated to be among topics where most problems would probably be experienced in Turkey.

In a study by Memişoğlu and Güçin (2017), participating teachers stated the need to include topics like coups, terror and anarchy, events experienced in our country, social assistance and solidarity, rights and duties, global warming and climate change, natural disasters, environment, and health. Gedik (2010) stated that current events that should be considered most in social studies lessons were threat of drought and political topics. Again, students were identified to have their interest in policies, administration, and national problems increased by a large rate with the use of current events (Chapman, Nolin, & Kline, 1997). When choosing current events, teachers pay attention to criteria like topics involving society, connection to the topic of the lesson, and not being topics involving politics (Memişoğlu & Güçin, 2017). The uncertainty about whether or not topics with political content should be used as current events is noteworthy both in this study and in the literature. When choosing topics to be used as current events, it was assessed as important to pay attention to the use of some concepts along with factors like the cultural, political, and belief structures of the location and students.

The topics that current events should encompass in the findings of this research are similar to the topics where most problems may be encountered, which may lead to the idea that participants experienced some hesitation. However, at this point it is necessary to remember that controversial issues should be taught during social studies teaching, and it should be considered that this conflict stems from the nature of teaching controversial issues.

The most appropriate class level to begin using current events was stated to be primary school third and fourth grade. The main reason for stating these class levels is considered due to the importance of children achieving the skill of thinking abstractly after gaining basic skills like reading, writing, counting, and reading comprehension. Moving from this finding, it is considered that it will be important to use current events in learning beginning from the first levels of children's education.

Preservice teachers stated that they thought they would use current events appropriate to the class level of students when they began teaching. The available research shows that educational activities completed in school are only one of the factors ensuring acquirement of citizenship

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topics (Haas & Laughlin, 2000). For this reason, the need to perform school and non-curriculum practices in order to be able to implement the understanding of raising effective citizens is clear.

Results of research suggests that most teachers followed current events and adopted a more traditional style when teaching current events (Değirmenci & İltir, 2017). Here, no matter how innovative the approach, the importance of how the current event is used comes to the foreground.

In addition to all this, it was explained that the accuracy of current events brought to class and reliability of information is very important (Gedik & Altun, 2008). In terms of using accurate and reliable data, teachers having 21st-century skills about knowledge, digital issues, information-communication technologies, and media literacy, etc., is important. The importance of data being reliable increases in importance considering that the most frequent forms of current event use by teachers involve using newspaper and internet news and giving current examples from daily life or close surroundings (Deveci, 2007; Dinç & Acun, 2017). Additionally, there are studies stating that the teachers used multiple news-gathering methods but mainly the internet and that the aim was to access reliable news sources (Sağlam, Bozkan, & Bozkan, 2016). The reason for this may be said to be the critical approach within the scope of media literacy, which has an important place in both individual life and the curriculum.

The use of current events appears to be an important tool that will contribute to individuals feeling like they are part of society and the world, being able to be active, democratic, global, digital citizens with increased awareness and responsibility, and should definitely be included in teaching processes.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made for implementers and researchers:

- This implemented model may be used by other lecturers in universities.
- As current events are not an area specific to social studies education, it is necessary to ensure the use of current events for preservice teachers at all class levels, to introduce lessons related to topics that may be assessed for current event use or to use current events in available lessons.
- It is necessary to teach preservice teachers how to approach current events and cases with a scientific viewpoint during undergraduate education.

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- An attitude scale related to the use of current events should be developed, more comprehensive research with qualitative studies may be designed, and the attitudes of preservice teachers about this topic may be investigated.

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