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Activity Planning in Social Studies and Fake News Activity Examples

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Abstract: To achieve the goals determined in social studies teaching, some principles should be followed in the planning and implementation of educational situations. Along with arranging the educational environment and content, the teacher should know the social studies teaching principles and perform the activities in accordance with these principles. Activities planned in this direction not only enrich the teaching environment, but also help the student to socialize, gain the habit of working in line with his interests and needs, and develop his personality. In addition, it facilitates learning by making students an active member of the learning environment by planning activities by taking into account the social studies teaching principles, offering options suitable for students' individual differences and giving instructions, helping students make their own decisions, and creating an active learning environment in the classroom. The emergence of the Internet and social media has significantly changed media coverage and perception and understanding current concerns about fake news has required considering the new social dynamics brought by new media technologies. While media technologies have great promise for learning, young people need support and training to learn to make the right decisions as they navigate the digital world. In this sense, it is thought that the suggested activities will be guiding for students.

Keywords: Social studies, Activity, Planning, Fake news

Introduction

One of the most important stages of the teaching process in social studies is to design an activity. Activities can be designed to realize new learnings, reinforce learned information, eliminate difficulties, correct misconceptions and raise awareness about information sources. However, although activity design may seem easy, it is a difficult process that needs careful attention. Since the effects of social studies activities on the development of understanding and thinking skills are important, learning activities should be target-oriented, planned and implemented with great care.

Activities in social studies teaching enable students to arouse their curiosity and question their priorities and to perceive social-global activities from different aspects. In addition, it enables students to develop their problem solving, research and communication skills, ensures that what is learned is permanent and meaningful, enables students to develop positive attitudes towards social studies, and is effective in their orientation to a profession in the field of social studies. In this context, activities such as concept maps, educational games, finding slogans, prioritizing, preparing a poster, designing a newspaper page, travel-observation, word association can be used in the social studies lesson. Activities planned to be implemented in social studies; it should be aimed at learning, take into account individual differences, help to think and create individual meaning, put the student in the center, be original; should support cooperation. In addition, the activities that students will be active in should include materials that allow them to model, appropriate to their level and prior knowledge, related to daily life, interesting and thought-provoking, and should be aimed at eliminating the difficulties of the student in the learning process in a way that appeals to more than one sensory organ.

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Media technologies used as a source of information have changed over time, developed and increased in use. As the access and use of these technologies at home and school increases, so does the need to support students' understanding of how to be safe, responsible and collaborative digital media users. The emergence of the internet and social media has significantly changed media coverage and perception and understanding current concerns about fake news has required considering the new social dynamics brought by new media technologies (Mason, Krutka & Stoddard, 2018). The lack of transparency of news experiences on media platforms, the fragility of individual experiences and media manipulation have created a fertile ground for fake news (Bulger & Davison, 2018; Figueira & Oliveira, 2017; Fuchs, 2014; Hands, 2013; Marwick & Lewis, 2017). Activities applied in learning environments can be beneficial in order to provide students with a critical perspective on fake news in the media and to develop a consistent understanding of the media environment. While media technologies have great promise for learning, young people need support and training to learn to make the right decisions while navigating the digital world. Based on this fact, it is aimed to present examples of activities that are thought to provide the development of students' critical thinking and decision-making skills against fake news in the media in an appropriate theoretical framework.

Method

This study is a descriptive study in the screening model, which includes activity suggestions prepared to create activities that will enable the development of students' critical thinking and decision-making skills against fake news in the media. The data were obtained by using domestic and foreign scientific publications on social studies teaching, activity planning, critical thinking skills and decision-making skills, social studies course and workbooks for all levels, and social studies curriculum. As a result of the examination of the data sources, a framework was formed on what should be considered in the activities to be designed; Activities aimed at improving students' critical thinking and decision-making skills against fake news have been tried to be created with an understanding in line with this framework.

Findings

Within the scope of the findings, two examples of fake news activities (True or False? and News Hunter) that can be used in the social studies course are presented.

Activity Name: True or False?

Time: 40 minutes

Class: 8

The Basic Question to Ask: What is the source of the news?

Materials: Computer, network connection, projection

Implementation of the Activity: A fake news received on Twitter is reflected on the projection screen and read. The news content is below:



Picture 1. Fake news example (<https://twitter.com/teyitorg/status/880359667578306565>)



An old man living in Salta, Argentina, allegedly was the German dictator of the time, Adolf Hitler. The fact that the 128-year-old man spent the last 70 years in hiding increased the truth of these claims.

The German immigrant announced that he came to the country in 1945 with a passport identifying Herman Guntherberg. There are a lot of rumors about the immigrant who entered Argentina with a fake passport right after the end of the war, that he was the former Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. This immigrant emerged last year after the Israel secret services stopped tracking former Nazi war criminals and said:

" I have committed many crimes in my lifetime. I had to spend more than half of my life hiding from the Jews, so I took my punishment more than enough." (<http://haberler.com/128-yasindaki-yasli-gocmenin-adolf-hitler-oldugu-9768917-haberi/>)

After this news content is given to the students, the following questions are asked:

- When you saw that this news was on the agenda on twitter, how would you comment under this news from your own twitter address? (Positive/Negative)
- How do you think these comments affect the feelings of the German immigrant?
- What will be the fate of the negative comments directed to German Immigrant when the news turns out to be not true?

After getting the answers to these questions, have students use Google (or other search sites) to see what they can find about themselves online. Determine if students have encountered any disturbing or worrying content about them. Then discuss how to deal with negative content when they encounter it.

Activity Name: News Hunter

Time: 40 minutes

Class: 6

The Basic Question to Ask: How do you determine the accuracy of the news?

Materials: Computer, network connection, projector, images from different newspaper news, white paper, glue, colored pencils.

Implementation of the Activity: The class is divided into two groups. White paper, glue, pencils and images from different newspaper news are randomly distributed to the first group, and they are asked to individually write news content consisting of 3 sentences suitable for these images (The introductory sentence of the news is included in the given images). Examples of images given are below:

#NASA bu kez Ay'a ya da Mars'a değil Güneş'e şempanze yolluyor! Sebebi ise... hry.yt/grQYV



Picture 2. The image used in the activity (<https://listelist.com/viral-yanis-haberler/>)



Picture 3. The image used in the activity (<https://tr.euronews.com/2021/07/08/ingiltere-turkiye-yi-k-rm-z-listede-tutmaya-devam-etti-turkler-imza-kampanyas-baslatt>)

Participants are given 15 minutes for the procedures to be done. Then, the news cards prepared by the first group are randomly distributed to the second group. The second group is asked to write two suggestions about how they will follow in order to determine the accuracy of the news.

After the implementation phase is completed, the suggestions made by the second group are read aloud in front of the class and the suggestions for accessing the right information are discussed. In addition, the participants are informed about the copyright of the images used, and the contents of the newspaper news, in which the images are based, are reflected with the help of projection and compared with the news content written by the students.

Conclusion

Considering the fact that the primary purpose is to provide the development of critical thinking and decision-making skills in order for students to learn to make the right decisions while navigating the digital world during the social studies education and training process, it is aimed in this study to present the activity examples that are thought to provide the development of these skills in an appropriate theoretical framework. In this context, two examples of fake news activities are presented.

Rather than correcting misinformation, teaching viewers to be skeptical may be a more effective approach to combating fake news (Lee, 2018). Teachers can use fake news in the media to develop not only stronger scientific thinking, but also students' critical thinking, decision-making, research, enhanced communication skills, and encourage science-focused civic engagement. As a matter of fact, the structure of the activities used in the classroom environment has a very important place in students' critical thinking and the emergence of different thinking structures. Therefore, it can be said that learning can be more permanent and meaningful if well-designed activities are used correctly and appropriately within the social studies curriculum.

Scientific Ethics Declaration

The author declares that the scientific ethical and legal responsibility of this article published in EPESS journal belongs to the author.

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Internet Resources

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- <https://listelist.com/viral-yanis-haberler/>
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- <https://twitter.com/teyitorg/status/880359667578306565>

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