

Active Learning-Based Children's Rights Education for Primary School Teacher Candidates^a

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of children's rights (CR) education on the understanding and attitudes of primary school teacher candidates regarding CR through active learning-based implementations. Explanatory sequential design was employed in the study. The quasi-experimental design with non-equivalent pre-test-post-test control group and case study were employed. Experimental implementations were conducted with 72 third year teacher candidates. The experimental group was trained for 13 weeks by employing the Active Learning-Based Children's Rights Education Curriculum (ACREC) developed in the study and the traditional teaching method was used in the control group. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews with 12 teacher candidates were carried out. The findings revealed that post-test scores showed significant difference in favour of the experimental group, and that the development of understanding was higher in this group. The ACREC was found to contribute to teacher candidates in the context of understanding, attitudes, behaviours and professional development concerning CR.

Keywords: children's rights education, active learning, curriculum development, classroom teaching, teachers training

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Introduction

Children's rights (CR) are defined as a subset of human rights with particular attention to children's rights to protection against any harmful action and to an adequate standard of living (Öztürk, 2019). CR aim to protect children from abuse and harm, meet the needs that are basic to existence such as health, education and shelter and provide them with the opportunity to be raised under emotionally appropriate conditions (Nelken, 1998). These rights play a pivotal role in their growing-up as physically, mentally and psychologically healthy individuals (Akyüz, 2021). Various documents have been published to assure the children of these rights, which are crucial for them, throughout history. Of these, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is presently the most widely ratified international document that defines CR and the most complete statement of their rights (Flower, 2007). The Convention set out a clear mandate for guaranteeing opportunities for CR to be respected, protected and ensured by contracting states on an international scale (Landsown et al., 2014). However, there are certain ongoing challenges to the implementation of CR (Todres & Kilkelly, 2022). Children's rights education (CRE) is of great importance in the realization of these rights. The CRE encompasses educational implementations where children's rights are exercised (Howe & Covell, 2007), and aims to educate children on its principles and provisions (Covell et al., 2010). The CRE is based on the principles that children have rights, that they should learn about their rights and that they should be given opportunities to utilize and defend their rights (Save the Children, 2006). This educational process includes recognizing the rights through practices in certain environments where CR are respected (Howe & Cowell, 2007). Teachers are the most important actors in the realization process of the CRE. In this process, they assume numerous duties such as solving the problems arising in the process by teaching and maintaining children's rights (Öztürk et al., 2019). However, teacher's lack of knowledge, skills, attitudes regarding the CRE pose significant problems in the failure to realize the CRE effectively (Howe & Covell, 2007; Kılıç & Öztürk, 2018; Lansdown et al., 2014; Öztürk et al., 2019; Öztürk & Kalender, 2021; Robson, 2016; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). This situation highlights the necessity to educate teacher candidates about the CR in pre-service teacher training process (Dağlı, 2015; Öztürk et al., 2019). Studies to be commenced at younger levels is of importance in terms of the acquisition of values in rights education

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(Anglin, 1992; Starkey, 1991), it is particularly significant that this training is provided to prospective classroom teachers who will serve at primary school level, where the CR is effectively taught formally. In addition, examining the classroom teacher training program in Turkey, it has been seen that there are no courses defined by the Council of Higher Education regarding the CR and CRE. In this respect, further studies are required in order to provide an insight into the realization of the CRE in classroom teachers training programs. The CRE entails certain skills such as learning the rights by experience, acquiring democratic participation and social skills, and in this regard, active learning practices gain increased significance in this process. Active learning-based practices are based on the active participation of students in the learning process, as opposed to passively receiving information from the teacher (Prince, 2004). In active learning process, students generate ideas, solve problems and exercise what they have learned (Silberman, 1996). In general, this process includes developing students' science process skills, involving students' higher-order thinking skills and placing a greater emphasis on children's own exploration of their beliefs, values and attitudes related learning (Wilke, 2003). All these skills are of great importance for the CRE and related studies have been conducted in the literature. Accordingly, in their study carried out as an action research, Hassi et al. (2015) intended to teach the CR to students at secondary schools through drama technique; however, Mtukwa (2010) examined how process drama method could be used as a medium for educating junior school learners about their rights. In their study, Covell and Howe (1999) tried to educate primary school students about children's rights through active participation-based practices and Sever Serezli et al. (2023) employed problem-based learning to teach university students about the CR. Topçu (2019) carried out implementations to raise awareness and develop attitudes concerning the CR among primary school students via creative drama method; however, Çarıkçı (2019) intended to conduct certain practices based on the same purpose through active learning. Öztürk (2019) carried out the CRE implementations including active learning with pre-school teacher candidates and Uçuş (2013) aimed to provide knowledge and raise awareness regarding the CR through the CRE program, which includes active learning methods, with primary school students. In the same vein, Kent Kükürtcü (2019) carried out the CRE implementations with pre-school students through activities and Torun and Duran (2014) conducted the CR implementations to develop attitudes among primary school students via games. When these studies are generally evaluated, it is observed that it has been focused on students at primary and secondary schools. According to the body of literature reviewed, no study on the CRE through active learning-based practices for pre-service teachers has been encountered. In this context, this study is thought to provide an insight into how to carry out the CRE through active learning methods, to form a basis for curriculum development studies to make the CRE more effective and to contribute to the filling of the gap in the relevant literature. In light of preceding discussion, the present study is purposed to examining the effect of active learning-based CRE on the understanding and attitudes of primary school teacher candidates regarding the CR.

Method

Research Design

This research, which is designed to investigate the effect of the CRE on the understanding and attitudes of primary school teacher candidates regarding the CR through active learning-based implementations, conforms to explanatory sequential design, one of mixed research methods. To this end, quantitative data are collected and analysed first, then qualitative data are collected and analysed based on quantitative data in order to elaborate the quantitative findings. The quasi-experimental design with non-equivalent pre-test-post-test control group (Cohen & Manion, 1994) was employed in the quantitative phase of this research. Two branches at the third-year level in a state university in Turkey were randomly assigned to one control group and one experimental group. In the research, the experimental group was given the CRE with Active Learning-Based Children's Rights Education Curriculum (ACREC) and the control group was given the CRE based on traditional method for 13 weeks. Scale for the Attitude towards Children's Rights (SACR) and the Evaluation Form for the Development of Understanding on Children's Rights (EF) were administered to both groups as pre-test and post-test. The qualitative phase of the research, however, aligned with case study (Creswell, 2014). In this respect, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 primary school teacher candidates selected through criterion sampling, one of purposive sampling methods among the students in the experimental group. In these interviews, where the Interview Form on the Effectiveness of the Curriculum and Individual Development (IF) was used, it was aimed to elaborate the effectiveness of ACREC and to gain an insight into the acquisitions of primary school teacher candidates within the context of the CRE.

The Study Group of the Research

The Study Group of the Quantitative Phase of the Research

The study group of the quantitative phase of the current research consisted of 72 primary school teacher candidates studying at the third-grade level in a state university. Of the students, 36 were in the experimental group, and the remaining 36 were kept in the control group. The ages of the subjects in the control group ranged between 19-21, and 23 were female and 13 were male. In the control group, however, the ages of the students ranged between 19-22, and 25 were female and 11 were male. None of the primary school teacher candidates had previously received any training on the CRE and had not conducted individual studies with the purpose of gaining knowledge.

The Study Group of the Qualitative Phase of the Research

The study group of the qualitative phase of the research was determined among the pre-service teachers in the experimental group through criterion sampling, one of purposive sampling methods and 12 primary school teacher candidates constituted the study group of the qualitative phase of the research. In the selection of the subjects constituting the study group, it was determined as a criterion that they participated in all the implementations within the scope of Active Learning-Based Children's Rights Education, that four of them had low level of academic achievement, that other four of them had medium level of academic achievement and that the remaining four of them had high level of academic achievement and, finally, that they voluntarily took part in the interview. In accordance with these criteria, the study group consisted of 5 male and 7 female students aged between 19-21.

The Construction Process of the ACREC

In the first step, needs analysis studies were carried out. In that sense, the general objectives and achievements of ACREC were determined based on the results of needs analysis and expert opinions. The plans were submitted to the expert opinion and the necessary corrections were made. The second step was the implementation process. The pilot study was conducted and the program was finalized. The activities carried out within the scope of ACREC are presented below on the order of weeks:

Week 1

The activity entitled Umbrella of Rights was oriented to target pre-service teachers to develop understanding and attitudes towards the importance of the CRE. In the first step, where educational games were utilized, the students were given small papers and asked to write down and pin what they understood when the puppet baby's umbrella brought to the class was called the CR. Based on the pinned papers, the CR was defined through question-answer technique. In the second step, it was aimed to raise awareness by carrying out a large group discussion on the importance of the CR. By the end of the activity, the students evaluated what they had acquired in the context of the development of understanding and attitudes towards the CR and its importance.

Week 2

The activity titled Let's Stop the Violation aims to raise awareness of the pre-service teachers on the violation of the CRE and to gain an understanding of what to do when faced with the violation of the CR. In the first step, the subjects were divided into groups and the case studies were individually studied and it was followed by a whole class discussion. In this process, it was ensured that the teacher candidates developed awareness regarding the violation of the CR. In the second step, the students discussed what to do when faced with the violation of the CR through question-answer technique. Finally, the students were asked to prepare posters in accordance with the content of the activity.

Week 3

The activity entitled I Have the Convention aims to provide an understanding of the UNCRC and its principles and an attitude towards its importance. In the first step, a puzzle activity was held in order to introduce the UNCRC to teacher candidates and provide information on its content. The importance and necessity of the UNCRC was discussed. In the second step, the basic principles of the UNCRC were studied using educational games. During the evaluation process, the concept map was developed and shared.

Week 4

The activity titled We Classify the Rights aims to provide an understanding of the classification of the UNCRC to the teacher candidates. In the first step, the Jigsaw technique was used with the purpose of classifying the rights in the UNCRC and of determining the articles to which the rights are adhere based on this classification. In the second step, the pre-service teachers were requested to create a concept map that includes the information they have learnt. Thus, all groups were provided with an understanding concerning the classification of the rights. Finally, a general evaluation of the activity was made through question-answer technique.

Week 5

The activity titled Education for Every Child aims to provide an understanding and attitude towards the right to education, the importance and necessity of the right to education. In the first step, pre-service teachers worked in groups on a case study regarding the right to education and shared out. In the second step, studies oriented at the right to education and at its importance were conducted using station technique. At the end of the activity, a general evaluation was made through question-answer technique.

Week 6

In the activity entitled The Most Fundamental Right: Living, educational games, question-answer technique, newspaper publishing and discussion, among active learning methods and techniques, were used. The purpose of this activity is to provide an understanding of the right to life and an attitude towards its importance. Besides that, it is aimed to raise awareness that there is a hierarchy of rights in terms of their importance.

Week 7

The activity titled Warm Housing and Food aims to develop an understanding regarding the right to life such as shelter and food and to raise awareness of its importance to the pre-service teachers. During the activity process, educational games, question-answer technique, animation and photo frames that are among active learning methods and techniques were utilized. Through these activities, it is attempted to raise awareness towards the right to life and its importance among pre-service teachers.

Week 8

The event entitled A Game Story aims to aid the pre-service teachers to acquire an understanding and attitude towards the children's right to game, rest and leisure and their importance in a child's life. In the first step, the painting "Children's Games" by Pieter Brueghel was addressed within the context of CR to game, rest and leisure through photo-picture description. Accordingly, it was ensured that the pre-service teachers developed an attitude towards the right to game and leisure by focusing on how children might feel when they were deprived of this right. In the second step, the class was divided into groups of 5 students and evaluations within the scope of CR to game, rest and leisure were made using story completion technique. An evaluation of the activity was made via question-answer technique regarding what was learnt in the activity and the changes in pre-service teachers' views.

Week 9

In the activity titled I Have an Idea, active learning method and techniques such as educational game, question-answer, role-play and large group discussion were used. Through this activity, it is aimed to develop an attitude towards the understanding and importance of CR to participate, express their feelings and views among the teacher candidates. In the first step, teacher candidates were matched and one was asked to tell about an incident that happened to him/ her and the other not to listen to what was told. With this activity, it was discussed how one felt when s/he could not express his/ her feelings and views. Then, role cards were used to enable them to play a role regarding the right to participation in the decision-making process related to them. During the evaluation process, the groups created three cases in which children were able to use their right to participation and a group discussion was held on the importance of the right to participation.

Week 10

The activity entitled Children's Voice aims to develop an attitude towards the understanding and importance of the CR to participation, to freedom of association and peaceful assembly. In the first step, two cases were investigated, and the understanding and awareness towards the children's right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly and its importance through question-answer technique. In the second step, the participants played a ball game by saying "It is the CR to freedom of association and peaceful assembly because ...". At the end of the activity, a general evaluation on the above-mentioned right was made through whole class discussion.

Week 11

In the activity titled A Newspaper Headline: The Mechanic's Apprentice, efforts were made to ensure that the pre-service teachers gained an understanding and developed an attitude towards the CR to be protected from child labour. In the first step, case studies based on true life stories related to child labour were examined by question-answer technique. Thus, it was attempted to raise awareness regarding the CR to be protected from child labour and its importance. In the second step, the reasons of the failure to realize the CR to be protected from child labour were examined by using fishbone technique. In the third step, solutions were developed to realize this right by brain-storming. At the end of the activity, a general evaluation was made by carrying out a whole class discussion.

Week 12

The activity entitled Stop Abuse! aims to help the teacher candidates acquire an understanding and attitude towards the CR to be protected from neglect and abuse. In the first step, pre-service teachers presented posters on CR to be protected from neglect and abuse before the class and made evaluations within the context of this right. In the second step, a "find and sort game" was played regarding what to do when encountered any forms of neglect or abuse. Then, a whole class discussion related to legal obligations was conducted. During the evaluation process, the teacher candidates were asked to give examples of the right to be protected from neglect and abuse, and shared opinions on the importance of this right.

Week 13

The activity titled Rights Stop at Nothing aims to make the pre-service teachers acquire an understanding and attitude towards the rights of the children with disabilities. In the first step, teacher candidates were divided into groups and given cards with different disabilities such as sight and hearing. The teachers were requested to make animations regarding these disabilities on the cards and then evaluations were made. In the second step, a group work concerning the rights of the children with disabilities was carried out and a list of disabled children's rights was generated through question-answer technique. At the end of the activity, an overall evaluation was made about the rights of the children with disabilities and their importance.

Implementation Process of the Control Group

A 13-week plan was prepared concerning the predetermined acquisitions within the current research. In this regard, the CR and its importance, the CR violation, the measurements against the violation of the CR, the importance of UNCRC, the general structure and principles of the UNCRC and the things to do when faced with the violation of the CR were explained to the pre-service teachers in the control group through traditional teaching method. In this process, active learning methods and techniques were not employed as in the implementation process of the experimental group.

Data Collection Instruments***Scale for the Attitude towards Children's Rights***

Scale for the Attitude towards Children's Rights (SACR) formerly developed by Karaman-Kepenekci (2006) to determine the attitudes of participants toward children's rights was used. The split-half reliability coefficient of the single-dimension questionnaire consisting of 22 items was determined as 0.77 and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient as 0.85. However, it was calculated for the reliability of the questionnaire for the present research and found as 0.80.

The Evaluation Form for the EF

Within the scope of the present study, the evaluation form for the development of understanding CR was utilized. In the process of developing the above-mentioned form, the relevant body of literature was initially reviewed (Harwood & Meshane, 1996; Öztürk, 2019; Platten, 1995) and it was attempted to gain an insight into how to evaluate the development of understanding and in which contexts (including contents) questions should be asked to assess the development of understanding of the CR. Based on this information and in accordance with the objectives of the program, a sample interview form consisting of open-ended questions was developed. The sample form was submitted to the opinion of four field experts and then a pilot study was conducted. In line with the feedbacks received in this process, the necessary corrections were made and the form was finalized. Eight open-ended questions to determine the understanding of the CR were included in the form.

The Interview Form on the IF

The interview form was initially developed and used by researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and individual development. In the preparation process of the IF, open-ended questions were generated with reference to the opinions of field experts. The items were presented to expert opinions and revised based on the feedbacks received. The interview form, which has been piloted and finalized, four open-ended questions related to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the program and individual development are included.

Data Collection

SACR and EF were concurrently administered to all subjects in the experimental and control groups prior to and after the implementation. IF was employed for 12 subjects through semi-structured interviews following the implementations within the framework of ACREC. In an attempt to prevent data loss, the interviews were recorded using a voice recorder by obtaining the permission of the participants.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the Data on the SACR

The independent samples t-test was run on pre-test and post-test data related to the SACR. Before the test, Shapiro-Wilk test was performed in order to assess whether the sample is likely to originate from a normal distribution. Listed below in Table1 are results of the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality.

Table 1

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality Results

Measurement	Groups	N	Shapiro-Wilk <i>p</i> -value
Pre-test Score	Experimental	36	0.110
	Control	36	0.312
Post-test Score	Experimental	36	0.056
	Control	36	0.631

Analysis of the Data on the EF

Content analysis was performed on the data regarding the evaluation for the development of understanding CR. In the analysis of the data, an analysis framework developed by Ekiz and Akbaş (2005) for exploring understanding levels by reviewing the relevant literature was used (Table 2).

Table 2*Analysis Framework for Understanding Levels*

Levels	Contexts
Good Understanding (GU)	Including responses encompassing all aspects of the scientific answers.
Narrow Understanding (NU)	Including responses covering one or more aspects of the valid scientific answer, yet not all aspects of it.
Fail to Understand (FU)	Repeating the question and including irrelevant and unclear responses.
Misunderstanding (MU)	Including students' responses that are alternatives to valid scientific answers and involving participants' responses that do not correspond to scientific facts.
Fail to Respond (FR)	Including such answers as "I don't know" or "I forgot" or leaving blank.

The findings obtained yielded by the data regarding understanding levels were presented by using "C" for the pre-service teachers in the control group and "E" for the ones in the experimental group. In this respect, C13, for example, refers to the thirteenth person in the control group and E20 to the twentieth person in the experimental group.

Analysis of the Data on the IF

The findings obtained from the IF were subjected to content analysis. In this process, the data set produced from the interviews was investigated line by line in accordance with the research objective and related codes were generated. The codes were re-examined and those concerning similar purposes were compiled and four categories were created. The pseudonyms used in the EF were used while presenting the findings regarding the IF.

Reliability and Validity of the Qualitative Data

Certain studies were carried out in an attempt to ensure reliability and validity in the current research. In order to ensure data loss prevention, the interview data was recorded through a voice recorder. Thus, data collection methods and techniques and evidences regarding the conclusions made in the study were explained in a clear and detailed way to enable people to understand the process. Coder reliability was used to ensure the reliability of the results of the analysis. Accordingly, the data set were submitted to the opinion of a faculty member who is an expert in the children's rights education and has qualitative research knowledge. The coding done by the researcher for ensuring the reliability was presented to external expert and agreement and dissidence were determined between the codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Inter-coder reliability for the EF was found as 86% and, for IF, it was found as 85%. It was sought to achieve consensus on the disagreements by discussing differences in coding.

Findings

The findings of the study are presented under three headings in this study:

Findings on the Development of Attitudes regarding the CR

In the current study, the independent samples t-test was performed on questionnaire scores in order to examine the preservice teachers' development of attitudes related to the CR and the results are given in Table 3.

Table 3*Independent Samples t-Test Results of SACR Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores*

Measurements	Groups	N	\bar{x}	S	sd	t	p
Pre-test Scores	Experimental	36	70.47	6.15	70	0.233	0.816
	Control	36	70.16	4.88			
Post-test Scores	Experimental	36	102.36	5.66	70	19.22	0.000
	Control	36	79.05	4.56			

As noted in Table 3, it has been observed that there is no significant difference between the questionnaire scores of the pre-service teachers in the experimental and control group prior to the ACREC implementation [$t(70) = 0.233$, $p > 0.05$], justifying that the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the children's rights in

experimental and control groups were similar before the implementation. However, independent samples t-test results of post-test scores of the questionnaire demonstrates a significant difference between the post-test scores of the teachers in experimental and control group [$t(70) = 19.22, p \leq 0.05$]. When the SACR averages were examined in an attempt to determine of which group significant difference was in favour, it was found that the mean scores of the questionnaire administered to the pre-service teachers ($\bar{x} = 102.36$) were higher than those in the control group ($\bar{x} = 79.05$). This finding evidence that the development of attitudes of the teacher candidates in the experimental group towards the CR were higher.

Findings on the Development of Understanding regarding the CR

In the present study, following the experimental procedures related to the CRE, examinations were carried out to find out whether there was a difference in the understanding of the teacher candidates in both groups regarding the CR and UNCRC and the violation of the CR Accordingly, related findings are shown below (Table 4).

Table 4

Findings on the Development of Understanding Regarding CR, UNCRC and the Violation of the CR

Situations in which the development of understanding is achieved			Good Understanding		Narrow Understanding		Failed to Understand		Misunderstanding		Fail to Respond	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The development of understanding on the CR	Pre	CG	0	0	30	83.33	0	0	4	11.11	2	5.55
		EG	0	0	30	83.33	5	13.88	0	0	1	2.77
	Post	CG	14	38.88	22	61.11	0	0	0	0	0	0
		EG	34	94.44	2	5.55	0	0	0	0	0	0
The development of understanding on the UNCRC principles	Pre	CG	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	63.88	13	36.11
		EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	69.44	11	30.55
	Post	CG	18	50	10	27.77	0	0	0	0	8	22.22
		EG	36	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The development of understanding on the violation of the CR	Pre	CG	0	0	12	33.33	0	0	20	55.55	4	11.11
		EG	0	0	14	38.88	0	0	18	50.00	4	11.11
	Post	CG	5	13.88	16	44.44	0	0	15	41.66	0	0
		EG	33	91.66	3	8.33	0	0	0	0	0	0
The development of understanding on the classification of the rights in the UNCRC	Pre	CG	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	50.00	18	50
		EG	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	47.22	19	52.77
	Post	CG	8	22.22	14	38.88	0	0	10	27.77	4	11.11
		EG	35	97.22	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.77
The development of understanding on the children's right to participation	Pre	CG	0	0	17	47.22	0	0	0	0	19	52.77
		EG	0	0	19	52.77	0	0	0	0	17	47.22
	Post	CG	12	33.33	17	47.22	0	0	4	11.11	3	8.33
		EG	33	91.66	3	8.33	0	0	0	0	0	0
The development of understanding on the children's right to be protected	Pre	CG	0	0	18	50.00	7	19.44	0	0	11	30.55
		EG	0	0	25	69.44	0	0	6	16.66	5	13.88
	Post	CG	12	33.33	19	52.77	0	0	0	0	5	13.88
		EG	33	91.66	3	8.33	0	0	0	0	0	0
The development of understanding on the children's right to grow and develop	Pre	CG	0	0	12	33.33	0	0	13	36.11	11	30.55
		EG	0	0	10	27.77	0	0	19	52.77	7	19.44
	Post	CG	11	30.55	6	16.66	0	0	12	33.33	7	19.44
		EG	34	94.44	2	5.55	0	0	0	0	0	0
The development of understanding on the children's right to live	Pre	CG	0	0	16	44.44	6	16.66	0	0	14	38.88
		EG	0	0	9	25.00	20	55.55	0	0	7	19.44
	Post	CG	14	38.88	13	36.11	7	19.44	0	0	2	5.55
		EG	36	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note. Pre = Pre-measurement; Post = Post-measurement; EG = Experimental Group; CG = Control Group

Table 4 shows that the findings related to the development of understanding have been classified into eight contexts. Of these, the findings regarding the development of understanding on the CR reveal that the teachers in both groups have given responses at NU level to a great extent (83.33%) prior to the implementations. Following the implementations, it is revealed that 34 teacher candidates in the experimental group and 14 pre-service teachers in the control group have given responses at the level of understanding. An example regarding the level of understanding by a preservice teacher is as follows: *"Fundamental rights and all additional rights refer to the CR. Each child has the same standard of rights. The CR means each child's entitlement of equal protection in terms of education, life, shelter, nutrition etc."* (E1)

The findings related to the UNCRC principles indicated that, before the experimental procedure, in the control group, 23 pre-service teachers made explanations at the level of MU level, 13 at FR level and, in the experimental group, 25 teacher candidates made explanations at MU level and 11 at FR level. In this context, a teacher candidate at MU level stated that *"... is to protect children"* (E36). Nevertheless, following the implementations, it was observed that, in the control group, 18 pre-service teachers made explanations at GU level and 8 at the CV level; however, in the experimental group, all teacher candidates were seen to make explanations at GU level. Within the responses given at the GU level, it was determined that the participants made a detailed explanation on the four basic principles of the UNCRC that are the right to live and have the possibility to grow and develop, the child's best interests, non-discrimination and the right to participation.

The findings regarding the understanding on the violation of the CR showed that teacher candidates in both groups were not able to give responses at GU level prior to the implementations and that they made explanations at NU, MU and FR levels. Accordingly, the statement of *"It is the failure to fulfil the rights granted to children or their inability to benefit from those rights"* (C3) may be given as an example of an explanation at NU level. However, the following statements of the teacher candidates may be shown as an example of the explanations at MU level: *"Restricting, repressing and acting dominantly is the violation of the CR"* (E15) and *"It prevents children from freedom of living and limits them"* (E20). By the end of the experimental procedures, it was determined that, in the control group, 5 of the pre-service teachers gave responses at GU level, 16 at NU level and 15 at MU level. On the contrary, in the experimental group, 33 of the teacher candidates were found to give responses at GU level and 3 at NU level. Examining the GU-level responses, it has been detected that the participants expressed the violation of the CR as a loss of rights, directly or indirectly, resulting from the drawbacks, attitudes or unfair intervention of the states together with such statements as *"It is the child's suffering from harmful actions in case the state lags behind providing the necessary support and opportunity"* (E4)

The findings of the development of the understanding of the classification of rights in the UNCRC demonstrated that, in the control group, 18 pre-service teachers made explanations at MU level and 18 at FR level before the implementation. It was revealed that, in the experimental group, 17 teacher candidates made explanations at MU level and 19 at FR level. In this regard, the statement of *"It can be fundamental rights and social rights"* (E19) may be given as an example of explanations at MU level. Following the implementations, 14 teacher candidates in the control group were found to give responses at NU level and 35 participants in the experimental group were seen to make explanations at GU level. It was observed in the responses given at GU level that pre-service teachers made detailed explanations by making classifications such as the right to live, to be protected and to participation.

In the present study, the findings of the development of understanding on the children's right to participation indicated that, in the control group, 17 pre-service teachers gave responses at NU level and 19 at FR level; however, in the experimental group, 19 teacher candidates were found to make explanations at NU level and 17 at FR level prior to the implementation. Examining the responses given at NU level, participants were observed to state that *"It refers to being able to express their opinions freely"* (C18). After the implementation, 12 pre-service teachers in the control group and 33 teacher candidates in the experimental group were found to give responses at GU level. In light of these responses, it can be said that teacher candidates made explanations on children's rights from different aspects as to participation in decision-making processes that concern them, to freedom of association and peaceful assembly and to games and recreational activities.

When it comes to the findings of the development of understanding on the children's right to be protected, it was resulted that, in the control group, 18 pre-service teachers gave responses at NU, 7 at FU level and 11 at FR level; however, in the experimental group, 25 teachers candidates made explanations at NU level, 6 at MU level and 5 at FR level before the implementation. The following statement can be given as an example of a NU-level response: *"Taking measures against violence and abuse"* (C10). The findings regarding the development of understanding after the implementation showed that, in the control group, 12 teacher candidates gave responses

at GU level, 19 at NU level and 5 at the FR level; however, in the experimental group, 33 teacher candidates made explanations at GU level and 3 at NU level. These findings imply that 91.66% of the pre-service teachers in the experimental group and 33.3% of the participants in the control group have given responses at GU level following the implementation. As seen in the statement of “*It is the protection of the child from any physical, mental and spiritual harm. The right to protection from abuse, protection by the judicial system, the right to protection in armed conflict and the right to be protected from work life can be given as examples*” (E25), the pre-service teachers gave comprehensive responses at GU level.

Another context under investigation within the scope of the current research was the development of understanding on children’s right to have the possibility to grow and develop. Accordingly, the findings showed that, in the control group, 12 pre-service teachers gave responses at NU level, 13 at MU level and 11 at FR level. It was determined that 10 teacher candidates in the experimental group made explanations at NU level, 19 at MU level and 7 at FR level. An example of MU-level explanations is as follows: “*It should progress in terms of mental and physical development required by the developmental ages*” (C33). At the end of the implementation, it was found that, in the control group, 11 pre-service teachers gave responses at GU level, 6 at NU level, 12 at MU level and 7 at FR level. However, it was revealed that, in the experimental group, 34 made explanations at GU level and 2 at NU level. An example of responses given at GU level is as follows: “*Children need to be guided to get a good education in accordance with their abilities. It is their right. They have freedom of thought. Such rights regarding games and entertainment are also their developmental rights*” (E10).

The findings on the development of understanding of children’s right to live demonstrated that 16 teacher candidates gave NU-level responses, 6 gave FU-level responses and 14 gave FR-level responses in the control group prior to the implementations. However, in the experimental group, 20 pre-service teachers provided explanations at FU level, 9 at NU level and 7 at FR level. An example of NU-level explanations has been cited as follows: “*Children have the right to live from the moment they are born*” (C1). On the other hand, an example of FU-level statements is as follows: “*I think that playing games and participating in different activities are among the child’s right to live*” (C29). After the implementations, it was found that 14 pre-service teachers made GU-level explanations, 13 made NU-level explanations, 7 made FU-level explanations and 2 made FR-level explanations in the control group. Nevertheless, all the participants in the experimental group were observed to give responses at GU level. Following statement is an example of GU-level responses: “*It refers to child’s having appropriate living standards and to meeting his/her needs completely. Such rights as the right to food, to life and housing are also included in this right*” (E22).

Examining the results in general, it can be said that, after experimental implementations, the pre-service teachers in the experimental group were able to make GU-level explanations regarding the CR, UNCRC and the violation of the CR to a great extent; yet, the teacher candidates in the control group were found to give NU-level responses mostly.

Findings on the Effectiveness of ACREC and Individual Development

In the current study, in addition to the quantitative data used to examine the effectiveness of ACREC, qualitative data were also collected with the purpose of elaborating the quantitative results and provide a detailed explanation of the obtained results. Accordingly, findings on the effectiveness of the ACREC and the acquisitions provided by the program to the teacher candidates within the scope of the CR are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Findings on the Effectiveness of ACREC Wand Individual Development

Categories	Codes	<i>f</i>
The Development of Understanding on the CR and UNCRC	Acquiring understanding on the CR	12
	Acquiring understanding on the UNCRC	12
	Acquiring understanding on the violation of the CR	5
	Acquiring understanding in terms of professional development	4
	Understanding the hierarchy of the rights in order of importance	2
The Development of Attitudes towards the CR and UNCRC	Developing positive attitudes towards the CR	12
	Developing positive attitudes towards the UNCRC	12
	Developing positive attitudes towards the CR for professional development	4

Categories	Codes	f
The Development of Behaviours towards the CR	Developing democratic behaviours	6
	Attentive listening to children	5
	Respecting for children	5
	Making observations on the CR	4
	Raising awareness towards the CR	4
	Conducting research on the CR	3
	Being a role model for complying with the CR	3
	Transferring what has been learned about the CR to life	2
Views on the effectiveness of the ACREC	Ensuring permanent learning about the CR and UNCRC	11
	Gaining professional competence regarding the CR	9
	Providing and effective training regarding the CR	6
	Increasing the knowledge on the CR	6
	Raising awareness towards the importance of advocating for the CR	6
	Developing empathy skills within the context of the CR	5

As noted in Table 5, the findings on the effectiveness of ACREP and individual development have been grouped under four categories. Of the categories, within the framework of the findings on The Development of Understanding on the CR and UNCRC, the pre-service teachers stated that they developed understanding on the program, CR, UNCRC and the violation of the CR and professional development and that they grasped the hierarchy of the rights in order of importance. This finding implies that the pre-service teachers have significantly developed such understandings as raising awareness towards the necessity of the CR in terms of professional development and the hierarchy of the rights in order of importance as well as learning about the basic concepts of the CR. In this regard, concerning the development of understanding on the UNCRC, a teacher candidate reported as follows: "... we talked about the UNCRC and I knew almost nothing about it. After training, this has changed a lot. That's why this training has been very useful for me" (E10).

Within the context of the development of attitudes towards the CR and UNCRC, the teacher candidates reported that they developed positive disposition to the ACREP, CR, UNCRC and professional development regarding the CR. A pre-service teacher explained this situation as follows: "*I didn't know about these rights before... I developed attitudes towards them later. When I took the course, I learned about these rights, how they could produce an effect, and how I could treat the child considering these rights. I paid attention to acting more fairly after the course...*" (E23). A teacher candidate who developed positive attitudes towards the UNCRC stated as follows: "*In fact, we didn't have a disposition to the convention because we didn't know about it. As I learned, I developed a positive attitude. We became even more conscious about the Convention. Children are valued, and we have learned and known about it*" (E22).

In the study, within the context of the development of behaviours towards the CR, the teacher candidates pointed out that, after the implementation, they developed various behaviours such as acting democratically, conducting research on the CR, transferring what they have learned about the CR, being a role model in behaving in line with the CR and respecting for children. This finding shows that the pre-service teachers developed a variety of behaviours both in terms of their communication with children and their behaviours in daily life and studies related to acquiring information regarding the CR. In this respect, a teacher candidate reported that s/he carried out research on the CR by saying "... when I took it as a course, I felt the need to do more research... By conducting research on this topic and pondering on it, I became more conscious" (E15).

Regarding the effectiveness of the ACREP, the teacher candidates emphasized that the implementations ensured permanent learning concerning the CR and UNCRC; provided professional competence for the CR; offered an effective training on the CR; enhanced their knowledge about the CR; raised awareness towards the importance of supporting the CR and developed empathy skills within the context of the CR. These findings demonstrate that the ACREP fulfils such significant functions as creating an effective learning environment that ensures permanent learning, the development of professional competence and the enhancement of knowledge in addition to raising awareness towards advocating for the children's rights and establishing empathy. Accordingly, a teacher candidate stated this situation as follows:

If we learned them theoretically, I think that would not be so permanent. When looking back, I remember the practices we carried out. I recall the animations and the activities we did. It's more permanent for me. Besides,

doing something by feeling and asking what you would you if you were is different and saying that this should be done is different. In my opinion, everything we do by feeling is more permanent. I was able to adopt it by this means (E4)

When the findings were evaluated in general, it can be said that the ACREP has gained various acquisitions to the pre-service teachers in terms of the development of understanding, attitude, behaviour and professional development related to the CRE.

Discussion, Result and Suggestions

This paper aims to investigate the effect of the CRE implementations on the pre-service teachers' understanding and attitudes towards the CR through active learning methods. The results of the research have revealed that the CRE carried out with active learning-based practices is more effective compared to the CRE performed with the traditional teaching method. Accordingly, by the end of the implementations conducted with active learning method, it was determined that the pre-service teachers' understanding on the CR, UNCRC and the violation of the CR increased to a high level of understanding and misunderstandings were eliminated. Added to this, after the implementations carried out with the traditional teaching method, it was found that the teacher candidates gave responses at NU level to a great extent and misunderstandings were observed in a part of the control group. These results have demonstrated that the CRE aligned with active learning-based practices is more effective rather than the children's rights education conducted with the traditional teaching method in terms of the development of understanding. Considering that teachers' lack of knowledge and awareness concerning the children's rights and UNCRC are significant problems (Howe & Covell, 2007; Öztürk et al., 2019) and taking into account the fact that children's rights education encompasses the educational practices realized in the UNCRC (Howe, 2005; Howe & Covell, 2007), it may be said that teacher candidates have acquired significant acquisitions through active learning-based children's rights education. Furthermore, the results of the research have shown that, in the experimental group where active learning-based practices were carried out, the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the CR are significantly higher than those in the control group where the traditional teaching method was performed. It can be alleged that teachers' negative attitudes towards the CRE pose serious problems (Howe & Covell, 2007; Kılıç & Öztürk, 2018; Öztürk et al., 2019; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000) and that the effective acquisition of positive attitudes through the active learning-based implementations is of great importance for the CRE. These findings underpin the functionality of active learning-based practices for an effective children's rights education in teacher training programs which are regarded as the most crucial area of action in the CRE (Jerome et al., 2015). Indeed, practices such as creative drama, case study, educational game, collaborative learning, small group discussion, which are employed in the active learning-based implementation process, are generally considered as effective implementations for human rights education in a broad sense and for children's rights education under this concept (Amnesty International, 2002; Brander et al., 2002; Flowers, 2007; Gümüş & Şentürk, 2022; Hassi et al., 2015; Öztürk, 2019). In addition to acquiring knowledge and attitudes in human and children's rights education, given the necessity of learning processes in which awareness towards the violation of rights, critical thinking and empathy skills and sense of responsibility are ensured; ideas are mutually evaluated on daily situations encountered and collaborative work is encouraged (Brander et al., 2002; Flowers, 2000, 2007; Levin-Goldberg, 2008; Misgeld, 1994), it may be asserted that active learning-based practices have established the appropriate learning environment for the CRE. When the relevant body of literature is examined, it is observed that active learning-based practices performed with various participant groups within the context of the CRE have a positive effect on the development of understanding, knowledge, attitudes and awareness. In this respect, Topçu (2019) found that children's rights education carried out with drama method had a positive effect on the development of attitudes and awareness towards the CR among primary school students. Moreover, Öztürk (2019) undertook a study on pre-school teacher candidates and revealed that active learning-based practices positively affected the development of attitudes and understanding towards the CR. In the same vein, Hassi et al. (2015), in their study on secondary school students, unveiled that drama method was effective for human and children's rights education. Uçuş (2013) reported that the children's rights education program, involving active learning methods, ensured the development of knowledge and awareness regarding children's rights. Çarıkçı (2019), however, revealed that active learning-based practices aided primary school students to raise attitudes and awareness towards the CR. In parallel with the studies in the related literature, in this study as well, active learning-based implementations have effectively realized the development of understanding and attitudes towards the CRE, and accordingly, it may be concluded that these practices generate a functional learning process for the CRE. On the other hand, based on the research findings, active learning-based implementations were found to be useful for the CRE by classroom teacher candidates in various aspects such as ensuring the development of understanding, attitudes and competence regarding the on behalf of professional development, contributing permanent learning,

gaining democratic behaviours, respecting children, conducting research, and raising behaviours that can be transferred to daily life. The afore-mentioned results justify the assertion that active learning-based practices provide an effective learning process for the CRE in teacher training. In line with the results of this study;

- Dissemination of CRE with active learning-based practices for professional development in pre-service primary teacher education,
- Inclusion of active learning-based CRE courses as a course in primary teacher education programs,
- Within the scope of active learning-based CRE, workshops and studies should be carried out to provide pre-service primary teachers with planning and implementation skills for CRE,
- Conducting studies on pre-service teachers in different departments to determine the functionality of active learning-based CRE,
- Active learning-based CRE practices should be employed in in-service training programs for primary teachers can be suggested.

Code of Ethics

The ethical consent was obtained from Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee at Gaziantep University on 08.11.2021 with the approval decision number 14 (Number of decision: E-39083294-050.99-116106).

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Sınıf Öğretmeni Adayları için Aktif Öğrenme Temelli Çocuk Hakları Eğitimi

Öz

Bu araştırmada, aktif öğrenme temelli çocuk hakları eğitiminin sınıf öğretmenleri adaylarının çocuk haklarına ilişkin tutum ve anlayışları üzerine etkisi incelenmiştir. Araştırmada, açıklayıcı sıralı desen kullanılmış olup eşdeğer olmayan ön test-son test kontrol gruplu yarı deneysel desen ve durum çalışması işe koşulmuştur. Deneysel uygulamalar 72 üçüncü sınıf öğretmen adayı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Deney grubuna çalışmada geliştirilen Aktif Öğrenme Temelli Çocuk Hakları Eğitimi Programı (AÇHEP) kullanılarak 13 hafta boyunca eğitim verilmiş, kontrol grubunda ise geleneksel öğretim yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Nitel aşamada ise 12 öğretmen adayı ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bulgular, son test puanlarının deney grubu lehine anlamlı farklılık gösterdiğini ve bu grupta anlayış gelişiminin daha yüksek olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. AÇHEP'in öğretmen adaylarına CR ile ilgili anlayış, tutum, davranış ve mesleki gelişim bağlamında katkı sağladığı görülmüştür.

Anahtar kelimeler: çocuk hakları eğitimi, aktif öğrenme, program geliştirme, sınıf eğitimi, öğretmen eğitimi