



## The Impact of Using Writing-to-Learn Activities and Literary Products on Students' Academic Achievement in Social Studies Course

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The present study aims to investigate the impact of using writing to learn activities and literary products on students' academic achievement by employing a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test control group design and was conducted with 101 seventh graders in a secondary school affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in Erzurum, Türkiye, in the 2022/23 academic year, with 2 classrooms selected as the experimental group and 1 as the control group. For teaching the subject matter related to the course unit of "Culture and Heritage", writing-to-learn activities were engaged in for the purpose of teaching one of the groups (EG1, n=35), while activities based on literary products were used in the other (EG2, n=33), yet curriculum-based teaching was sustained for the control group (CG, n=33). The Culture and Heritage Academic Achievement Test developed by the researcher was used as a data collection tool in the study. While no statistical significance was noted between the groups considering the pre-test results before the experimental study, the post-test results obtained after the experimental activities demonstrated a statistical significance in favour of the experimental groups. It was concluded that the use of writing-to-learn activities and literary products for learning purposes in the social studies course had a positive impact on students' academic achievement.

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## Introduction

In recent years, with the technological advancements and scientific breakthroughs, major changes have occurred in the education system. The constantly developing and ever-changing world needs the kind of individuals who are aware of their responsibilities and understand what development really means (Ünal & Çelikkaya, 2009). Considering the developments around the world and the general characteristics of the social studies course, it seems that the ever-occurring changes have inevitably affected the social studies curriculum. Therefore, the 2005 curriculum in Türkiye initiated a constructivist approach that cares about individual differences and puts the students at the centre in such a way to allow them to

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communicate with the environment (Safran, 2014). According to the constructivist approach, what is of great importance is the use of various and student-centred strategies, methods, techniques, activities and materials that support active participation in the teaching process in order to enable students to construct knowledge in their own minds (Chen, 2003; Peko & Varga, 2014; Tural, 2015). A variety of teaching activities, materials, methods and techniques prepared according to the objectives and achievements to activate the students can be included in the social studies course. For that reason, this study focused on the use of activities based on literary products and writing-to-learn activities prepared not only in accordance with the lesson but also with the students' academic achievement levels and intended learning outcomes.

Regarded as a type of literature, literary products have been defined by different authors, a situation which is noteworthy in that all definitions have similar characteristics: Özdemir (2002), for example, defines a literary product as a type of art showing a special form, Artun (2014) as all kinds of verbal and written works that transform emotions, thoughts and dreams that affect people into energy.

Literary products, in which emotions, thoughts and dreams are expressed artistically in oral or written form, are used as a course material or activity in the education process (Beldağ & Aktaş, 2016) and many authors have asserted that the use of such products has many positive aspects (Akengin & İbrahimoglu, 2010; Common, 1968; Cooper, 1998; Kartın, 2022; Levstik, 1995; McKinney & Jones, 1993; Nelson & Nelson, 1999; Rainsberger, 1994; Savage & Savage, 1993; Sevinç, 2018; Şengül Bircan & Arıdil, 2010; Unkovich, 2011; Ünlüer, 2008). It is apparent that literary products are teaching tools that can develop students' mental activities such as imagination, problem solving skills, and reasoning (Dursunoğlu, 2011). Research has also shown that the use of literary products is essential in that it helps explore and solve social problems (Briegel & Camp, 2001), motivates students (Levstik, 1995), provides opportunities to experience other lives, touches people's emotions, teaches students about customs, traditions and culture (Unkovich, 2011), improves students' brain activities such as problem solving (Şimşek, 2007) as well as speaking skills through active participation (Tharp, 1995), helps students gain social skills (Cartledge & Kiarie, 2001), and supports teaching practices (Dyro, 1998). In this connection, literary products used in many different courses are also preferred and used in the social studies course. Such literary products to be contained in a social studies course (Arıcı, 2018; Arıcı & Urgan, 2011; Erdal, 2011; Öztürk et al., 2012; Şimşek, 2007; Urgan et al., 2011) can be classified as follows:

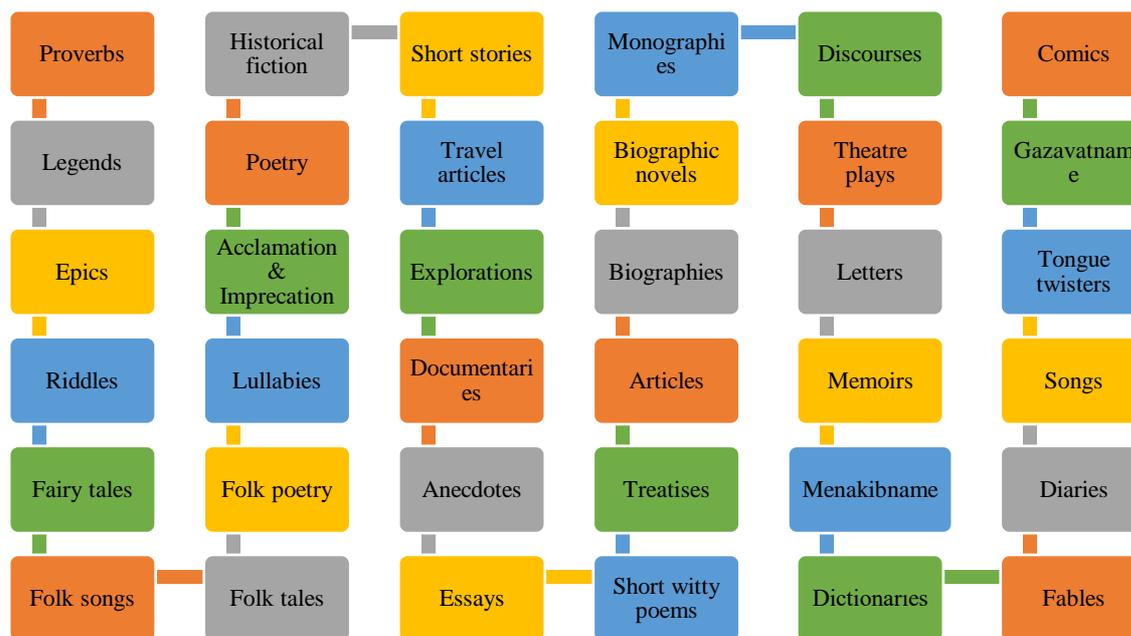


Figure 1. Literary products to use in social studies course

Figure 1 shows the kinds of literary products to be made use of in a social studies course. Given the various studies in this field, it is noteworthy that literary products have many benefits and are also recommended in the curriculum for social studies. More precisely, considering the social studies curriculum, the course should be enhanced with activities such as stories, poems, folk songs and proverbs, and it should be a priority to encourage students particularly to read literary products (MoNE, 2018).

Social studies course engages many activities and materials such as literary products that can make students active, one of which is writing-to-learn activities, referring to a mental filtering of the information acquired by the students and transferring it with their own phrases rather than trying to take it directly in the lessons (Kayaalp, 2020). A number of researchers have defined writing-to-learn activities in different ways: Myers (1984) defined writing-to-learn approach as a powerful learning tool in which ideas are expressed by using writing skills for better understanding of the given learning content and retention of information. Dukevich and Wossen (2015), on the other hand, presented it as a flexible and effective tool that aims to help students think about and understand ideas or concepts.

It is clear that these definitions suggest that students use the new experiences they have gained in education and the new knowledge they have learnt by associating them with the knowledge they already have through writing-to-learn activities. Students, thus, get to reflect the information which they have already learnt with their own ideas (Klein, 1999).

Research shows that writing-to-learn activities are often used as a course material or an activity in the education process and contribute to learning (Bell & Bell, 1985; Dukevich & Wossen, 2015; Emig, 1977; Hell & Elder, 2007; Hohenshell & Hand, 2006; Hooey & Bailey, 2005; Klein, 1999; Klein & Rose, 2010; Langer & Applebee, 1987; Mason & Boscolo, 2000; Sedita, 2013; Slinger Friedman & Patterson, 2012; Stewart et al., 2010). Writing-to-learn activities, which directly contribute to the development of students' linguistic, mental and

social skills, enhance their capacity of communication, self-expression, organising learned information, expanding mental dictionaries, and enrich students' knowledge background (Güneş, 2020). In addition to the benefits, these activities help students to evaluate the texts from a critical point of view, to ensure permanent learning, and to think deeply and creatively (Emig, 1977; Hand & Prain, 2002; Jordon, 2014; Klein, 1999; Walp, 2013). In addition, such activities contribute to the development of students' literacy skills (McDermott, 2010).

McLeod (1992) and Langer and Applebee (1987) stated that it is important that writing-to-learn activities be included in all courses taught at school and that teaching how to write is an essential element of school programmes and helps students to think in a more sophisticated manner. In order to examine the activities designed in line with the writing-to-learn approach in more detail, the model of Hand and Prain (2002) may serve as an important guide.



**Figure 2.** A model of activities in the writing-to-learn approach

Figure 2 shows in detail how, who, for what purpose, in what genres and on which topics the activities will be written. According to Hand and Prain (2002), this figure illustrates the complex connections between the intended learning outcomes and helps teachers in planning writing-to-learn activities. Suggesting that writing is a powerful strategy for learning, Myers (1984) also argued that this approach is very useful for social studies lessons as well as other lessons. Moreover, Boyer (2006) and Pitard (2001) emphasised that some skills can be developed through writing in social studies lessons. In addition, the social studies curriculum includes the aspect in which writing activities aim to provide individuals with some particular skills including the ability to use Turkish correctly, beautifully, and effectively (MoNE, 2018).

Not only the relevant literature but also the social studies curriculum indicate that literary products and writing-to-learn activities have numerous benefits and their use in lessons will be likely to be effective. It is apparent in the literature that literary products and writing-to-learn activities are often compared within themselves, alone or with different activities. However, this study investigated the effects of literary products and activities in relation to writing-to-learn approach on academic achievement with the participation of two different

experimental groups, and unlike other academic studies, the writing-to-learn activities and literary products were examined together in a social studies lesson. In this respect, this study is expected to contribute to the social studies literature, writing-based learning activities and studies on the use of literary products.

Since this study aimed to explore the impact of using literary products and writing-to-learn activities on academic achievement of the participating students in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade unit, “Culture and Heritage”, the research problem of the present study can be stated as follows: “Does the use of literary products and writing-to-learn activities for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies course unit, “Culture and Heritage” exert significant impact on students’ academic achievement?”.

In compliance with the objective, answers were sought to the following sub-problem statements:

- (1) Do literary products and writing-to-learn activities exert significant impact on academic achievement in a social studies course?
- (2) Is there any statistical significance between the mean academic achievement scores of the student groups in the course unit, “Culture and Heritage” in which literary products and writing-to-learn activities were used for teaching?

## **Method**

### ***Research Design***

The study was conducted as a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test/post-test control group. The characteristic of this design is that the control and experimental groups are formed in an unbiased way. For this, equal conditions are created for each group in a study besides making necessary measurements before and after the experimental study (Karasar, 2017). The model employed in this study is widely used for educational purposes since it is not possible to randomly assign individuals in such studies. Researchers, therefore, tend to study with available sample groups (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The classes in this study were randomly assigned and named as the experimental group 1 (EG<sub>1</sub>), experimental group 2 (EG<sub>2</sub>), and control group (CG). The Culture and Heritage Academic Achievement Test (CHAAT) developed by the researcher was used to compare the groups.

**Table 1.** Quasi-experimental design with the pre-test/post-test control group

Groups	Pre-test	Activities	Post-test
EG <sub>1</sub>	CHAAT	Writing-to-learn activities	CHAAT
EG <sub>2</sub>	CHAAT	Literary products-based activities	CHAAT
CG	CHAAT	Teaching based on the National Curriculum	CHAAT

As shown in Table 1, the activities included in the study were carried out in a secondary school located in the town centre with the participation of three separate sample groups: The sample group called EG<sub>1</sub> was taught through the writing-to-learn activities, and EG<sub>2</sub> with the use of activities based on literary products, whereas the sample group named as CG was taught based on the National Curriculum.

### *Study Sample*

The study was conducted with 101 seventh grade students in a secondary school affiliated to the Ministry of National Education located in Erzurum city centre in the 2022/23 academic year. This school was selected using the criterion sampling method. One class was selected as the control group (CG) with other two classes as the experimental groups (EG<sub>1</sub> and EG<sub>2</sub>). While the course unit “Culture and Heritage” was being taught, writing-to-learn activities were conducted with the EG<sub>1</sub> (16 Male/19 Female, n=35) and activities based on literary products were used for the EG<sub>2</sub> (12 Male/21 Female, n=33), whereas curriculum-based instruction was applied for the CG (15 Male/18 Female, n=33).

### *Data Collection Tools*

The Culture and Heritage Academic Achievement Test (CHAAT) was employed as a data collection tool, developed by the researcher in order to determine the impact of activities prepared in compliance with the writing-to-learn approach, and of literary products on academic achievement. In the development phase of the achievement test, the intended learning outcomes contained in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade course unit, “Culture and Heritage”, were taken into consideration and the cognitive levels in relation to such learning outcomes in Bloom’s taxonomy were identified. In order to prepare them, the opinions of two lecturers who are experts in the field were consulted and a specification table was prepared accordingly. The academic achievement test consisting of 30 questions was administered to 260 eighth graders from 4 different schools, who had previously been instructed the subject matter, and were thus thought to possess sufficient knowledge about the course unit. In an effort to avoid data loss, each student participating in the pilot study was asked to answer all the questions, after which the data analysis was made with the Test Analysis Program (TAP). The item discrimination index of CHAAT was 0.50, item difficulty index was 0.50 and KR-20 reliability coefficient was 0.78.

### *Data Analysis*

The analysis of the available data were made using SPSS 26.0 package programme. With the aim of comparing the academic achievement scores of the students in the sample, normality test was performed to control the data distribution.

Ak (2008) suggested using Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test for normality values in the case of  $n \geq 30$ . In addition, when kurtosis and skewness values are in the range of +1.5 and -1.5, they are considered suitable for normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell 2015). The statistical significance level in this study was determined as 0.05 as a criterion in the analysis of the data obtained from the study samples.

### ***Experimental Process***

Data was collected upon obtaining permission for the initiation of the study from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee at Atatürk University with the decision dated 06.09.2022 and numbered 10/03. After the activities related to the course unit, Culture and Heritage, were prepared, interviews were held with the social studies teacher working at the school where the activities would be conducted, and they were informed about the use of the activities. The sample groups to be included in the study were randomly selected from the existing classes in the school, a procedure after which all the groups were administered the designed pre-test prior to teaching them the course unit. The students in EG<sub>1</sub> and EG<sub>2</sub> were informed about these activities beforehand. Through the “Parental Consent Form”, the necessary permissions were obtained from the families of the students who were informed about the importance and purpose of the study. After starting the pre-determined course unit, writing-to-learn activities were involved to teach the EG<sub>1</sub> for each learning outcome. In the group determined as EG<sub>2</sub>, on the other hand, lessons were taught by using activities based on literary products for each learning outcome. In addition, the group named as CG was instructed based on the current curriculum. After the ten-week teaching process, the same measurement tool was administered again as a post-test.

In the experimental groups, activities prepared in accordance with the subject matter and intended learning outcomes were used in the teaching process. In this context, writing activities including letters, fairy tales, poems, stories, posters, speech balloons, newspapers, pictures, cartoons, handbooks and diaries prepared by the researcher were used for the sample group of writing-to-learn activities. At the end of each intended learning outcome, the students were administered the related activity prepared for that subject with utmost attention paid to ensure that all students participated in the lesson.

In the group where literary products were used, theatre plays, poetry, stories, gazavatname, travel articles and cartoons prepared by the researcher were used. All of these activities were executed together with the students, and the theatre plays were acted out by the students in the classroom environment. All of the activities were executed with the researcher while the teacher was in the classroom environment and administered to the whole class.

### ***Validity and Reliability***

Quantitative studies consist of certain challenges as regards internal validity, including instrument effect, background of the subjects, unequal groups, as well as the loss of subjects, test effect, and forming non-equivalent groups. In addition, the fact that the participants in the study are not selected in an unbiased manner draws attention as a notable situation to affect validity (Christensen et al., 2015). Therefore, some measures were taken in this study to increase the internal validity. Considering the characteristics of the subjects, it is noteworthy that the students in the experimental and control groups had demographically similar characteristics. A random assignment was made in determining the study samples in an effort to increase the internal validity.



No loss of subjects was noted, with the number of students in the groups in the beginning and in the end remaining the same. All the studies (pre-test, post-test, and activities) carried out during the study took place in the students' own classroom environment. The fact that the classroom environment familiar to the students were chosen in the study helped to make the students feel comfortable. The pre-test and post-test contained were the same at the beginning and end of the study. No changes were made in the data collection tools during the implementation of the activities. The same researcher conducted the implementation of the measurement tools and activities in the experimental groups, in addition to teaching the students in the control group.

The subjects in the sample groups had similar conditions in terms of the way the activities were conducted. In addition, considering the pre-determined course unit, "Culture and Heritage", all the subject matters were fully covered in accordance with the dates in the annual plan.

In order to increase the external validity of the study, utmost care was taken to ensure that there were sufficient number of participants in the given groups, and accordingly, 101 seventh graders took part in the current study after being informed about each stage of the study.

### **Results**

In this section, answers were sought to the following question: "Does the use of literary products and writing-to-learn activities for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies course unit, "Culture and Heritage", exert significant impact on students' academic achievement?" The academic achievement test prepared with this purpose was administered to the sample groups as a pre-test and post-test.

#### ***Culture and Heritage Academic Achievement Test Pre-Test Results***

The sample groups were administered the CHAAT before being instructed about the subject matter of the course unit, "Culture and Heritage". It was considered very important to find out whether there was a statistical difference between EG<sub>1</sub>, EG<sub>2</sub> and CG in terms of academic achievement pre-test scores. In order to further determine the presence of any statistical significance concerning the sample groups, One-way ANOVA test to compare the academic achievement of the groups. Since the descriptive statistics values of the groups should be included before applying the One-Way ANOVA test, Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of EG<sub>1</sub>, EG<sub>2</sub> and CG from the pre-test.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Results from the Culture and Heritage Academic Achievement Pre-Test

<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b><math>\bar{X}</math></b>	<b>Ss</b>
EG <sub>1</sub>	35	47.714	18.324
EG <sub>2</sub>	33	44.697	17.630
CG	33	42.575	16.494

As shown in Table 2, whether or not there was any statistical difference between the average values taken by EG<sub>1</sub>, EG<sub>2</sub> and CG was identified via One-way ANOVA test, whose results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** One-way ANOVA Results from Culture and Heritage Academic Achievement Pre-Test

Groups	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Squares	F	p
Inter-groups	454.579	2	227.290	.741	.479
Intra-group	30070.173	98	306.839		
Total	30524.752	100			

As can be seen in Table 3, the one-way ANOVA test results show no significant difference between the mean academic achievement scores of the groups ( $F_{(2, 98)} = .741, p = .479, p > .05$ ). The academic achievement scores between the groups before the activities started show similar characteristics.

### **Culture and Heritage Academic Achievement Post-Test Results**

After the activities were carried out in the experimental groups besides the current curriculum included with the purpose of teaching in the control group, the CHAAT was re-administered to the EG<sub>1</sub>, EG<sub>2</sub> and CG as a post-test. Next, whether or not there was a difference between the groups was examined based on the academic achievement scores obtained in post-tests. In order to make a comparison between the sample groups in relation to the participants' academic achievement, One-way ANOVA test was utilized. Since it is necessary that the descriptive statistics values of the groups be included before applying the One-Way ANOVA test, Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of EG<sub>1</sub>, EG<sub>2</sub> and CG from the post-test.

**Table 4.** Descriptive Results from the Culture and Heritage Academic Achievement Post-Test

Groups	n	$\bar{X}$	ss
EG <sub>1</sub>	35	67.571	16.059
EG <sub>2</sub>	33	78.787	15.960
CG	33	57.121	14.949

Table 4 shows the results of the One-way ANOVA test applied to find out the likely presence of any statistical significance between the average scores of EG<sub>1</sub>, EG<sub>2</sub> and CG. One-way ANOVA test results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** One-Way ANOVA Results from the Culture and Heritage Academic Achievement Post-Test

Groups	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Squares	F	P
Inter-groups	7749.190	2	3874.595	15.774	.000
Intra-group	24071.602	98	245.629		
Total	31820.792	100			

As shown in Table 5, the one-way ANOVA test results indicate that there is a statistical significance between the mean academic achievement scores of EG<sub>1</sub>, EG<sub>2</sub> and CG ( $F_{(2, 98)} = 15.774, p = .000, p < .05$ ). A Post-Hoc test was performed to determine in favour of which group there was a significant difference. Moreover, Tukey test was applied as one of the Post-Hoc tests since the variances were homogeneous. Table 6 presents the Tukey test results below.



**Table 6.** Tukey Test Results from the Culture and Heritage Academic Achievement Post-Test

Groups	Groups Compared	Difference Between Means	Standard Error	p
EG <sub>1</sub>	EG <sub>2</sub>	-11.216*	3.802	.011
	CG	10.450*	3.802	.019
EG <sub>2</sub>	EG <sub>1</sub>	11.216*	3.802	.011
	CG	21.666*	3.858	.000
CG	EG <sub>1</sub>	-10.450*	3.802	.019
	EG <sub>2</sub>	-21.666*	3.858	.000

As can be seen in Table 6, the Tukey test results show that the statistical significance between the Culture and Heritage Academic Achievement Post-test scores is in favour of EG<sub>2</sub> [ $\bar{X}$ =78.787),  $p < 0.05$ ]. The significant difference between EG<sub>1</sub> and CG is in favour of EG<sub>1</sub> [EG<sub>1</sub> ( $\bar{X}$ =67.571),  $p < 0.05$ ]. Based on this, it can be suggested that the group in which literary products were used was more successful than both the group in which the activities arranged in conformity the writing-to-learn approach were used and the control group. In addition, it is also noteworthy that the average score of the group in which writing-to-learn activities were engaged was higher than that of the control group.

Generally speaking, the result of the One-way ANOVA test reveals whether or not there is any statistical significance between the average values compared, though without providing any information about the magnitude of the difference. For this reason, the effect size value should be known alongside the statistical significance.

The effect size in One-way analysis of variance is a relationship coefficient named as **eta-squared ( $\eta^2$ )** (Can, 2017). The analysis of the effect size of this study indicated that its eta-squared value was  $\eta^2 = 0.24$ . According to Green and Salkind (2005), the possible eta-squared ( $\eta^2$ ) values can be interpreted as small when it has the effect size of 0.01, medium when 0.06, and large when 0.14. It appears that the eta-squared ( $\eta^2$ ) value in this study has a large effect size according to the data obtained.

## Conclusion and Discussion

This study investigated the impact of using literary products and writing-to-learn activities on academic achievement of the students in the social studies course by the use of the academic achievement test prepared in this context to administer in the sample groups as a pre-test and post-test.

The results of the One-way ANOVA test obtained from the academic achievement test administered as a pre-test before the experimental activity revealed no statistical significance between the mean scores of the groups to indicate the academic achievement, that is, the groups turned out to be equal to each other in terms of academic achievement level before the activities. After the experimental study, the sample groups were administered the academic achievement post-test for the course unit, "Culture and Heritage". The results of the post-test scores revealed statistically significant difference between the academic achievement average scores of EG<sub>1</sub>, EG<sub>2</sub> and CG. To put it in another way, a statistical significance was found in the post-test in favour of EG<sub>2</sub> (in which literary products were used) with further significance between EG<sub>1</sub> and CG in favour of the EG<sub>1</sub> (in which writing-to-learn activities were utilized).

Similar results were found when national and international studies on writing-to-learn approach and the use of literary products for learning purposes were analysed. Many academic studies were obtained in different fields revealing that literary products have positive effects on students' academic achievement. Having examined the possible influence of using literary products on student achievement in social studies course, Similarly, Bölücek (2008) examined the effect of folk songs on student achievement, reporting that those students in the experimental group were more successful than control group students. In the same context, Bryant et al., (2003) made use of Mozart classics and teacher-made songs to increase students' academic achievement. The authors reported that there were significant increases in students' academic achievement as a result of the activities included. Similarly, Jennings and Jennings (1992) reached a parallel conclusion that students turned out to be successful thanks to literary products.

In conformity with these studies, another study conducted by Smith, Monson, and Dobson (1992) on the use of historical novels, reported that the use of such literary products positively affected students' academic achievement. Moreover, Sidekli and Coşkun (2014) reported that those in the experimental group in which folk songs were used in the social studies course was more successful than those in the control group. Another study with similar results was conducted by McKinney and Jones (1993). The authors examined the effect of children's books and regular textbooks on students' attitudes and knowledge acquisition, reporting that the experimental group students ended up learning more.

In the related literature, similarly, many studies are found to have concluded that literary product-supported teaching is effective in increasing students' academic achievement (Akengin & İbrahimoglu, 2010; Başol & Şanlı, 2016; Can, 2021; Ceylan, 2015; Erim, 2019; Gürlü, 2018; Humphries et al., 2011; Metaxa, 2013; Njoroge & Gathigia, 2014; Sidekli et al., 2013; Sidekli et al., 2014; Şenocak, 2018; Tharp, 1995; Tokcan & Alkan, 2013; Topcubaşı & Polat, 2014; White, 2003).

Considering the reasons why literary products turned out to be more successful than the writing-to-learn activities, we believed that the lesson may have become boring due to the fact that some of the activities in the group of writing-to-learn activities failed to attract the students' interest and some students lacked drawing skills. In the relevant literature review, some other studies were found to have reported similar reasons (Çontay, 2012; Dummer et al., 2008; Karaçağıl, 2014; Kayaalp, 2020; Yasul, 2019; Yeşildağ Hasaıcebi et al., 2017). It also appeared that the lessons were generally less tiring and the students had more fun in the group where literary products were used. A number of studies with similar results were also encountered in the relevant literature review (Akengin & İbrahimoglu, 2010; Bölücek, 2008; Çiçek, 2011; Common, 1986; Nelson & Nelson, 1999; Özşahin, 2009; Savage & Savage, 1993).

Research has shown that academic achievement increases with the inclusion of literary products in the teaching process. Unlike these studies, however, some other studies have reported that literary products remain insufficient or that the results have turned out not to demonstrate any particular achievement for experimental groups. Ayyılmaz (2016) examined the effect of using music with educational purposes in social studies course on students' academic achievement, reporting that the students' increased academic achievement scores did not show any statistical significance. Yarar (2010) reported a lack of statistical significance in the post-test scores of the students in the control and experimental groups. Similar to this, Alley (1988) included texts or dialogues in the control group for teaching

Spanish, while making use of song-supported teaching in the experimental group, but found no statistical significance in relation to the performances of the experimental and control group students. Moreover, Baysarı (2007) concluded that engaging the concept cartoons in teaching turned out to make no difference in students' academic achievement, and likewise, Çiçek (2011) reported no statistical significance between the achievement scores of the experimental and control groups.

In this connection, a number of studies can be found to have been conducted in many fields with the conclusion that the activities prepared in compliance with the writing-to-learn approach exert remarkably positive effects on academic achievement. Kayaalp (2020) for instance, investigated the impact of writing-to-learn approach on students' cognitive and affective learning in a social studies course, revealing that students' academic achievement significantly increased. In a similar fashion, Karaçağıl (2014) and Ay (2018) aimed to explore the influence of using the writing-to-learn method in a social studies course on academic achievement, concluding that experimental group students ended up being more successful than those in the control group. Similarly, Uçar (2019) found statistical significance between the control and experimental groups in favour of the experimental group. Demirçi (2022) conducted another study in order to be able to examine the effect of writing-to-learn approach-based activities on the likelihood of retention, academic achievement and critical thinking skills, concluding that there was a statistical significance in favour of the experimental groups. In conformity with such results, Robinson (2015) examined the use of bio-poems in social studies lessons, reporting the positive contributions it made to students' academic achievement.

In the consulted literature, many studies can be found to have been conducted in different fields with similar characteristics to these results. For example, McDermott and Hand (2013) looked into the effect of multiple writing-to-learn activities on chemistry teaching, noting that the activities proved beneficial. Similarly, Du and Wagner (2005) investigated the effect of using a web diary on cognitive learning and performance of different student levels, concluding that such activities had a positive effect on students. In addition, there are many studies in the field of science conducted with a variety of writing-to-learn activities. Köksal (2019) studied the effect of poem and diary-writing, and likewise, Pınar (2019) worked on the effect of diary-writing on academic achievement, reaching the results that such activities contributed to students' academic achievement. Many other studies can be found in the literature to show that writing-to-learn approach-based activities considerably contribute to academic achievement (Bell & Bell 1985; Bozat, 2014; Eker & Coşkun, 2012; Hell & Elder, 2007; Hohenshell & Hand 2006; Hooey & Bailey, 2005; İncirci, 2020; Jannah et al., 2020; Kardaş, 2019; Klein & Rose, 2010; Özkan, 2019; Pektaş, 2019; Stewart et al., 2010; Şahin, 2019; Yasul, 2019; Yeşildağ Hasançebi, et al., 2017; Yıldız, 2022).

It is also true that writing-to-learn approach-based activities have been shown to prove influential on students' academic achievement in many studies conducted in different fields. Despite this, unlike this result, many other studies exist, reporting that the said activities remain inadequate or fail to result in success (Külekcı, 2018; Rouse, Graham & Compton, 2016). As an example, Ray Parsons (2011) found that writing-to-learn activities in mathematics lessons failed to affect students' academic achievement at all. The studies of Slinger-Friedman and Patterson (2012) and Daşdemir (2017) indicated similar results. In particular, Daşdemir (2017) studied the effect of letter-writing in physics course on students' academic achievement, attitudes towards the course, and critical thinking skills, concluding that no statistical significance was present between the post-test mean scores of the sample

groups. Furthermore, Slinger-Friedman and Patterson (2012) examined the impact of writing-to-learn activities in geography lessons, reporting that no significant improvement was observed in student grades.

Additionally, Reaves et al., (1993) examined student achievement in vocational agriculture teaching by using writing-to-learn activities, reporting that such activities were no more or less effective than traditional teaching methods in terms of students' academic achievement. Nurnberg (2017) investigated the effect of the science writing heuristic (SWH) approach on students' academic achievement in chemistry course, indicating that there was no statistical significance between the groups.

## **Recommendations**

- Literary products and writing-to-learn approach-based activities could be engaged in a social studies course for the purpose of increasing students' academic achievement.
- Writing-to-learn approach-based activities and literary products could be utilized in order to ensure that what is learned in the social studies course become permanent, as well as to reinforce the knowledge, to make the course appealing, and to make the subject matters fun and intriguing.
- The activities based on writing-to-learn approach and literary products for learning purposes to be used in the social studies course could be enriched with visuals which are colourful and appropriate to the level of students, and they could also be designed in a way that can easily attract students' attention.
- Teachers and students should evaluate the activities in the social studies course and teachers should give feedback to students.
- Literary products and writing-to-learn approach-based activities could be involved in different course units in the social studies course and at different grade levels.
- Various studies could be used with the aim of determining the effects of different types of writing-to-learn activities and literary products on different variables in different courses and at different grade levels.
- Writing-to-learn activities and literary products could be used in studies related to the reinforcement of high-order thinking skills and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

## **Note**

This study was produced from the doctoral thesis titled "The Impact of Using Literary Works and Writing-to-Learn Activities in Social Studies Course on Students' Academic Achievement and Attitudes Towards the Course"

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