



Inquiry-Based Learning in History Teacher Education: A Local History Approach to Prospective Teachers’ Understanding

Arif Saefudin¹, Johan Wahyudhi², Yusran Ilyas³, Loso Judijanto⁴, Akhlaqur Rahman⁵

^{1,2,3}UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, South Tangerang, Indonesia

⁴IPOS Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

⁵University of Goettingen, Goettingen, Germany

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Traditional history teaching methods in the social sciences often overlook constructivist and inquiry-based approaches, meaning that trainee history teachers are under-exposed to such approaches. This study aims to evaluate how trainee history teachers understand and apply inquiry-based methods when local history is integrated into teaching materials, as well as to assess the pedagogical effectiveness of local history in enhancing teacher education. **Methods:** This study employed an exploratory qualitative approach involving history teacher trainees enrolled in a teacher training programme at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Data were collected through focus group discussions, interviews, and classroom-based inquiry activities. Data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify patterns in participants’ understanding and perceptions of inquiry-based learning utilising local history. **Findings:** The findings indicate that integrating local history into the curriculum significantly enhances participants’ engagement and interest. Students demonstrated a deeper understanding of inquiry-based learning, particularly in formulating questions, analysing sources, and drawing evidence-based conclusions. Participants also reported increased confidence in applying inquiry-oriented teaching methods, although concerns regarding classroom implementation remain. **Research implications:** This study is limited to specific groups and contexts, which may affect generalisability. However, it highlights the pedagogical value of contextual and inquiry-based approaches in teacher education. Challenges such as time constraints and institutional readiness need to be considered for wider implementation. **Originality:** This research contributes by demonstrating the effectiveness of local history as a pedagogical medium to support inquiry-based learning. It offers a contextual approach to bridging theory and practice in teacher education and suggests directions for future longitudinal research on sustained pedagogical impacts.



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INTRODUCTION

In the context of teacher education, educational policy and political issues are often highlighted that cannot be ignored (Adler, 2010). This underscores the need to consider these external factors in designing and implementing effective curricula and teaching methods (Saripudin et al., 2022). One of the influential teachings is the history lesson in social science studies. History learning is inseparable from the various educational reforms that have taken place. Throughout the last decade, various new initiatives have emerged and significantly impacted the study of history, especially in high schools (Cuenca, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2006). All these reforms have severe consequences for history teacher education. Therefore, history educators must understand and adapt to these new policies and practices to produce a more relevant, dynamic and effective history education.

One crucial component of recent efforts in the field of social sciences is the concentration on research-oriented, inquiry-based learning approaches, which involve using primary sources as historical data (Retz, 2017). In the last decade, the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) has released the C3 Framework to assist educators in planning

and implementing more effective instruction in social studies. The C3 Framework refers to the "College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards," which is designed to guide social studies teaching practices in schools in the United States (Chick & Corle, 2016). In Indonesia, the C3 Framework is relevant to the curriculum change under the Merdeka Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka). This curriculum emphasises character education and freedom to explore the region's potential (Sulistianingsih et al., 2022). The C3 Framework has significantly contributed to supporting the development of inquiry-based education in social studies (Santiago, 2019; Taneo & Ly, 2019). Many studies in the social sciences, such as Hu and Stahl (2023) and Barfod and Daugbjerg (2018), have enriched the understanding of how students can 'make history' and how inquiry method approaches can be designed to develop their abilities.

Research in the social science field has not yet explored aspects of history teacher education that facilitate understanding and skills through inquiry-based approaches. Some studies on prospective teacher contexts have been published, such as those by Tilak et al. (2023) and Tirado-Olivares et al. (2021). The involvement of inquiry-based approaches in education may have increased in schools, some examples being researched on the use of narrative inquiry to explore the identity of female students in higher education by Hu and Stahl (2023) or the importance of locality in the study of cross-border assistance to deliver humanitarian health services (Duclos et al., 2019), as well as other strategies involving the exploration and completion of history writing (Monteagudo - Fernández et al., 2020; Planas, 2019; Saripudin et al., 2022; Ung, 2021; Wheeler, 2017). Nonetheless, there is still a lack of information on what prospective history teachers understand and can do about inquiry-based teaching as they go through their educational process.

Recent publications highlight the need to integrate inquiry approaches in pre-service teacher education. Three papers have been published focusing on the practical use of digitisation technology in local history studies (Davidson & Reid, 2022; Saripudin et al., 2022; Sulistyono et al., 2019). In addition, Wheeler (2017) suggests using local history as a medium for productive, inquiry-based nostalgia. Other researchers, such as Hood and Reid (2018), utilise social media as a means of user engagement with local history. These studies, including methods that support constructivist approaches to history teaching, form the broader context for this research, in line with the C3 Framework and the publications that support it.

This research is a component of a project aimed at incorporating a comprehensive inquiry-based method into a single-term course on local history. Within the scope of this research, we characterise 'inquiry' as an educational endeavour where learners, solo or collaboratively, examine a series of events or situations (whether simulated or real) and conclude those historical data points. Based on our experience as researchers and lecturers who educate future teachers, we believe that applying local history investigation can provide an authentic intellectual experience in practising local history and encourage students' enthusiasm for learning local history (Sebbowa & Ng'ambi, 2020).

The unique contribution of this article is that it presents a case study in teaching inquiry methods that explores secondary-level teacher candidates' understanding of local history. The issue in this study is how to improve prospective teachers' understanding of the inquiry approach in the context of local history. The research design was inspired by the need to understand how prospective teachers formulate the concept of inquiry in the context of local history. Furthermore, the design is based on an interpretive approach that emphasises specific issues to expand prospective teachers' understanding of inquiry. This is done so that they can more effectively apply that understanding in teaching their students, although such practical application is not within the scope of this study. From the previous explanation, this study formulated the following research question: How do prospective history teachers understand the concept of inquiry? Does providing a series of lessons utilising local history-based inquiry improve their understanding of inquiry?

METHOD

Participants and Research Setting

For this research, data were gathered across one academic term from a cohort of 25 undergraduate students pursuing Social Sciences Education Program, all registered in a social science methodology theory course at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, located in South Tangerang City, Banten, Indonesia. Of these, fifteen were male and ten were female. Around 80 per cent of them are native to South Tangerang City, while the rest are a mix of Javanese and Sulawesi backgrounds. The students majoring in history education attend theory classes in their fifth semester and eventually become future history teachers in their final semester. There is no requirement to take history content courses to enter the programme. The only prerequisite is to have completed the course in the previous semester.

Teacher Education Context

The teacher training programme is geared towards guiding prospective teachers in applying teaching methods that are more advanced than the conventional approaches (such as memorisation and lectures) they often encounter as students in high school. As future history teachers, many of them tend to emulate such teaching models, using tools such as PowerPoint or guided notes. The teacher training department courses endeavour to demonstrate a more interactive, student-centred and inquiry-based approach. Although the introductory theory of education course touches on some of these aspects, the discussions are often generalised. It is not until students take a course in learning methods that they are formally introduced to the application of inquiry-based methods in history education at the senior secondary school level. The teaching staff within the university's Education Department believe that an approach centred around the learner, predicated on inquiry, is the most effective tactic for realising objectives that include outstanding planning and execution and a beneficial effect on pupil development, aligning with the university's theoretical underpinnings. This pedagogical strategy is systematically implemented in the education of prospective history teachers, beginning with lectures on methodology.

Pre-test Phase

The research methodology unfolds in a sequence of phases as detailed here: In the inaugural session, pupils undertake a preliminary examination designed to assess their familiarity with concepts and practices related to inquiry, encompassing constructivist principles, questioning strategies, active engagement in learning, problem-solving techniques, and student-oriented historical teaching methods. The examination, more precisely, invited the students to ponder their personal histories as learners of history and to recognise the academic approaches they were subjected to during their secondary schooling. This initial test required them to articulate 'inquiry-based learning' and 'local history' in their vocabulary and to pinpoint the cognitive skills they envisaged would emerge from employing inquiry-driven techniques in local history modules. It was intentional that students were not primed with any information regarding 'inquiry learning' (via lectures or mandatory readings), thereby ensuring that their definitions would stem from their direct experiences and prior educational encounters.

Instructional Phase (C3 Framework-Based Learning)

In the subsequent pair of instructional periods, the lecturer introduced foundational principles from the C3 Framework, including constructing enquiries, employing disciplinary apparatus, critically evaluating information sources, and applying evidence (Chick & Corle, 2016). The lecturer taught the pupils various exercises to foster student-led and enquiry-driven pedagogical techniques. Initially, a straightforward classification task was employed to familiarise students with enquiry-based education. In this activity, learners were challenged to select the ten most influential individuals from a comprehensive list exceeding one hundred notable figures in Indonesian history. The aim was to exemplify the student-driven nature of the inquiry method and to showcase how open-ended questions, in marked contrast to rigid multiple-choice questions, can result in a variety of legitimate answers rather than a single 'correct' answer dictated by the teacher. Following this, the instructor led a simulation exercise designed to immerse students in concepts such as scarcity and decision-making mechanics, which are significantly relevant to historical studies. After the simulation and subsequent discussions, students were adept at articulating and applying these concepts within historical analyses with clarity and sophistication. This method was utilised to illustrate how a student-centred pedagogical approach can amplify conceptual understanding, thereby enriching the grasp of historical content.

Local History Inquiry Phase

The third stage of the activity sequence took place during additional classroom sessions, where the instructor demonstrated several inquiry-focused and local history-based lessons. This stage started with the KWL (Know, Want to Know, and Learned) activity, which is considered effective as a trigger for an inquiry-based teaching approach at the secondary school level. This activity asks students to reflect on what they already know about the locations around South Tangerang City. Upon finishing the KWL task, the pupils were assorted into quartets to explore South Tangerang City's local history. The educator equipped each cluster with an assortment of primary sources pertinent to the distinct boroughs of South Tangerang City. These sources were exclusively visual, encompassing cartographic representations, snapshots, and drawings. The mandate for each set was to employ these visual aids to deduce insights about the historical narrative of South Tangerang City within the broader context of Indonesian history and to elucidate how these deductions enhanced their overarching comprehension of Indonesia's history.

Following the conclusion of the activity, a subsequent assessment was administered to evaluate the degree of the student's comprehension of the principal concepts (refer to Appendix A for a juxtaposition of the pre-test and post-test inquiries). In this assessment, the students were tasked with articulating their understanding of what constitutes inquiry-

based learning and contemplating the impact of the interplay between the inquiry method and local history studies on their academic experience.

Data Collection

The study utilised an array of data sources encompassing all student-generated documents like the pre-tests, post-tests, KWL charts, and other educational materials pertinent to the activities detailed, in addition to the lesson schemes and observational records compiled by the educator throughout the teaching interval. Comparative analysis was continuously applied to each student's pre-test and post-test responses, whilst supplementary documents underwent scrutiny to discern patterns using the constant comparative method (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). An interpretive framework was adopted to suit the organic nature of the classroom milieu, leveraging standard educational outputs from such an environment and employing cyclical, bottom-up analytical procedures to distil themes encapsulating the distinct perspectives and reflections of the participating pre-service teachers (Sunday et al., 2020).

Data Analysis

In this investigation, the integrity of the research was upheld by adherence to established criteria for trustworthiness, encompassing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Credibility was fortified by the sustained engagement between the lecturer-cum-researcher and the students within the theoretical course, thereby enabling the consistent gathering and examination of data. To align the interpretations of student feedback with the students' actual sentiments, the researcher engaged in routine debriefings and verification processes with the students. The researchers, functioning collaboratively over several months, meticulously ensured the dependability and confirmability of their data interpretations. Moreover, the study refrains from making assertions regarding the generalisability of these results to disparate scenarios.

RESULTS

From the analysis of the data, several principal themes emerged, including (1) a lack of prior knowledge and application of inquiry-based techniques before the theory course commenced; (2) a marked increase in eagerness and willingness to incorporate elements of local history into their future teaching methods, fueled by the encouraging experiences encountered throughout the course; and (3) a somewhat restricted view on the potential for implementing inquiry-based strategies within the framework of secondary education, notwithstanding the push from educational reform movements advocating for these methodologies. The analysis revealed notable differences between students' initial and final understanding of inquiry-based learning. To provide a clearer comparison, Table 1 summarises the changes observed between the pre-test and post-test.

Table 1. Comparison of Students' Understanding Before and After Instruction

Category of Understanding	Pre-test (n=25)	Post-test (n=25)	Description
Limited / unclear understanding	21	0	Students showed vague or incomplete definitions of inquiry
Basic understanding	4	5	Students identified inquiry as question-based learning but lacked depth
Developed understanding	0	20	Students demonstrated clear understanding, including questioning, source analysis, and evidence-based reasoning

As shown in Table 1, most students initially demonstrated limited or unclear understanding of inquiry-based learning. However, after the instructional intervention, all students exhibited a more developed understanding, particularly in relation to questioning, source analysis, and evidence-based reasoning. Firstly, about previous learning experiences, The data suggest that these prospective teachers experienced history education in line with what has been articulated in the academic literature: the dominance of traditional pedagogical approaches, a focus on knowledge accumulation rather than inquiry exploration, and reliance on textbooks and mastery of facts (Davidson & Reid, 2022; Saripudin et al., 2022; Sulistyono et al., 2019). Participants noticed only sporadic incidences of inquiry methods in their educational contexts. Nonetheless, they acknowledged that the teacher education programme had emphasised the relevance and importance of the inquiry approach, as stated in the introductory lectures they had undergone as part of the teacher education programme. However, in those lectures, the emphasis on inquiry was more implicit and generic than specific teacher education programmes offering explicit and discipline-focused approaches to history teaching methods.

In the context of inquiry-based learning, several students demonstrated a mostly correct basic understanding of the definition of this concept. Of the initial evaluations taken, twenty-one indicated that the understanding of inquiry was either in its infancy or not yet fully formed. Frequent responses included "learning that is driven by students' desires and questions" and "learning through exploration of students' questions related to the subject matter" (see Appendix B for a complete list of student responses to the pre-test).

Secondly, as a consequence of participating in the methodology classroom activities, as seen in the simulation, students expressed that they had gained new insights, not only about the essence of inquiry but also regarding the location that was the focus of their study. Expressions of their appreciation for the inquiry methodology and its potential implementation in the secondary education setting of history were conveyed through spontaneous comments in class, which the instructor documented in her notes. Although students showed motivation to implement this approach in their teaching practice, such motivation seemed to be counterbalanced by the perceived limitations commonly present in most secondary classrooms.

In the initial phase of engaging with the subject matter through the KWL framework, students displayed a somewhat clichéd understanding of urban dynamics in South Tangerang City, citing economic, societal, and governance challenges such as recession, crime, and graft. The students' responses showed the desire to delve deeper into the intricate history and contributing factors to the perceived decline of these urban areas. The KWL methodology facilitated the exploration of a spectrum of investigative themes. Upon concluding their inquiries, students employed a graphic organiser to encapsulate their discoveries regarding urban histories and connect these findings to larger narratives within the tapestry of Indonesian historical discourse. The completion of this visual summary not only addressed the initial queries raised in the KWL process but significantly enhanced the students' comprehensive understanding of the urban environments in question.

Though several reflections on the acquired local historical knowledge were somewhat broad yet precise, touching on ethnic strife, each collective could derive particularised and defensible historical insights about their designated city and aptly correlate them to the city's geographical context. For example, the group focusing on South Tangerang City identified how urban renewal efforts have reshaped the city and affected different population groups. The Timorese group revealed the city's role as the cultural centre of Timor Island. The group studying the Rote region emphasised its role as an economically vital port centre. Meanwhile, the group focusing on Flores highlighted the city's significance as an operational base for the survival of freedom fighters and the impact of the region's declining role on local history.

Students successfully utilised themes derived from specific urban models, such as the history of names, origins, the role of local kings, and their contributions to aspects of life as a foundation for formulating more comprehensive conclusions about Indonesian history. They also strengthen their arguments by using different types of evidence. In addition, they identified nuances in the national narrative, such as differences in the timing of certain events in South Tangerang City compared to cities in other provinces of Indonesia.

During the reflective dialogue following the enquiry, the students acknowledged the effectiveness of the enquiry method in deepening understanding and enhancing engagement. They contended that, much like their own experience, their prospective pupils would be inspired by the specific, relatable, and local scenarios presented in this study as a conduit for examining broader Indonesian historical themes. Under the tutelage of the instructor, they assimilated and connected the tasks they had executed with a deeper grasp of the enquiry approach as an educational tactic alongside the C3 Framework. Over time, they realised that the concept of 'enquiry', recurrently emphasised in the theoretical lectures, could be integrated across diverse disciplinary areas and educational stages.

Upon completing the activity, the post-test revealed that the students had developed a more precise, extensive, and diverse understanding of inquiry-based learning. Where only 21 students had previously demonstrated awareness of the inquiry method, all 25 had since attained a more profound appreciation for its significance and application in fostering investigations rooted in local history. Common responses included: "A teaching approach that poses questions, problems or scenarios to enable students to reach their conclusions" and "Inquiry learning occurs when students independently discover what to learn through investigation of sources and formulation of their conclusions." (See Appendix C for student responses to the post-activity post-test).

DISCUSSION

This research aims to examine the impact of incorporating local historical content into the curriculum of trainee teachers on their grasp of inquiry-based methodologies within social studies education. This subject has gained prominence in teacher training in light of recent educational reform efforts. As outlined in this paper, the value of the inquiry-based approach lies in its effectiveness in demystifying abstract notions, such as inquiry itself, by grounding learning in specific contexts, like the historical study of local communities. The pedagogical merit of local history in

history education has been underscored by various scholars, with one asserting that it facilitates student comprehension by bridging the curriculum with local occurrences (Duclous et al., 2019; Wheeler, 2017).

Whilst trainee history educators might recognise the term 'inquiry learning', this investigation reveals that their comprehension of the approach remains superficial. The research corroborates the prevailing notion that educators often emulate the teaching styles they experience. For most of these aspiring history teachers, an education steeped in inquiry-based learning was not the norm, highlighting the challenges of adopting and applying inquiry-based techniques effectively. The struggles in secondary education classrooms underscore the complexity of cultivating the cognitive abilities essential for engaging with inquiry-led learning (Barfod & Daughbjerg, 2018; Kyunghwa, 2022).

Prospective history teachers may hold views and prejudices that may hinder the implementation of inquiry-oriented approaches in their teaching practice (Cavanagh, 2018; Ninan, 2020). Educators who teach future history teachers face various barriers when attempting to integrate inquiry methods into their methods classes. These can include resistance from prospective history teachers who have not been exposed to effective inquiry-based teaching approaches in school, history or social science classes at the university level, or their own teaching experiences. In addition, they may misunderstand the essence of inquiry and how it can be applied in history teaching. Time constraints are also an issue. There is also a possible bias against the inquiry approach, which is considered less efficient than lecture-based teaching methods.

Kyunghwa (2022) highlights a prevailing challenge within teacher education: the struggle to ensure 'effective teacher education'. For educators of future history teachers, three specific dilemmas are acutely relevant: firstly, the 'apprenticeship of observation' dilemma; secondly, the 'application problem' concerning the extent to which prospective teachers can apply what they have been taught in their method lectures; and thirdly, the inherent complexity of the teaching task itself (Crocco & Marino, 2017). These challenges are pervasive throughout various levels and disciplines within teacher education, leading to a disconnect between the theoretical knowledge in university classrooms and the practical skills employed during in-field training. This gap is exacerbated by field placements often failing to provide the opportunity for teacher candidates to utilise the theoretical insights they have acquired. As Tilak et al. (2023) argue, a deeper examination of the teaching process reveals how the realities of classroom environments in schools can impede the possibilities for educational innovation, particularly the adoption of inquiry-based teaching and learning.

Faced with these challenges, we believe that researchers in the social sciences and aspiring history teachers must design examples of learning activities that aim to facilitate inquiry in teacher education. There are already various examples of inquiry-orientated teaching methods for history classes, including those that fit the C3 Framework (Chick & Corle, 2016). Typically, these examples focus on topics commonly taught, such as the great figure Soekarno, Muhammad Hatta or national events, such as the War of Independence in Java. Nevertheless, our methodology focuses on the specific localised setting of South Tangerang City, proposing tailored approaches to crafting inquiry that are particularly suited for application in teacher training. Our earlier investigations into local history, situated within the structure of a pre-service teacher training scheme, have catalysed this current exploration. This study seeks to ascertain how local history can serve as a vehicle for enriching the comprehension of inquiry methods.

Although most of the pre-service teachers in this study were already quite familiar with conventional approaches to teaching history, many had a fairly accurate or at least vague understanding of inquiry learning. Two reasons might explain this phenomenon: (a) the definition of the word 'inquiry' is relatively easy to grasp, and (b) this terminology appears frequently in teacher education curricula. Many students admitted that they had heard the term in some contexts, although they also stated that their understanding and ability to apply it was lacking. For prospective secondary teachers who choose to specialise in history, integrating the concept of inquiry into their coursework can be a step towards broadening their horizons, especially if they have no previous experience that could facilitate the application of this concept to history teaching.

Even though most theory class students hailed from South Tangerang City, their knowledge of the city's historical narrative was largely superficial, restricted to textbook excerpts and the mandatory national history curriculum. The instructional approach adopted in this theory course integrates sessions dedicated to South Tangerang City's local history, underpinned by a consistent and deliberate focus on the principles and practices of inquiry. Leveraging the C3 Framework, the instructor anchors these activities within a wider theoretical context. By prompting students to articulate what "questions" signify in both the pre-test and the final assessment, the objective is to enhance the students' reflective understanding of these concepts. This enhancement is further bolstered by a hands-on learning method in studying local history. This pedagogy not only heightened student engagement and curiosity but illuminated how they can grasp significant concepts in national history by delving into local narratives. Such exploration involved probing how societies evolve and how local history can exemplify broader historical patterns. A significant outcome of this exercise was the heightened recognition among the students of the distinctive history and heritage of their birthplace, which, while echoing the national historical discourse, also displays unique differences.

The reflections on the undertaken activity can be condensed into the following points: Initially, students possessed a scant understanding of South Tangerang City's historical background; nevertheless, they could leverage this rudimentary information as a launchpad for extended research, drawing upon primary sources. In the second instance, the local historical context exemplifies the application of inquiry-based pedagogy within social studies education. This approach harnesses and builds upon students' pre-existing knowledge, thus fostering more profound and impactful learning experiences and engagement. Lastly, in post-lesson discussions centred on the inquiry-led local history lesson, students acknowledged the method's effectiveness and appeal, recognising the potential of local historical content to kindle interest and comprehension in their prospective pupils.

Finally, the methods adopted by the students also reflected what we termed a measured "realism" regarding the opportunities for implementing this approach in their teaching practice. While the method attracted and motivated them, there were concerns about how this inquiry-oriented approach could add complexity to their role as teachers, especially as it required more creativity in designing lessons, finding resources, and formulating important questions. Despite the encouragement of reform efforts on the part of the state and professional organisations, such as Masyarakat Sejarah Indonesia for history lessons, these prospective history teachers remain sceptical about the potential for significant changes to the national curriculum with which they are familiar in South Tangerang City schools, which is often considered "a mile wide but an inch deep" (Crocco & Marino, 2017).

Given the implementation issues raised by previous research, as well as the challenges of teaching basic inquiry concepts to adolescents, as pointed out by various researchers (Cavanagh, 2018; Seneviratne et al., 2019; Tirado-Olivares et al., 2021), one of the weaknesses of this study is its absence of tracking the history teacher candidates' journey into their first assignment to evaluate the extent to which they are motivated and successful in implementing inquiry methods. Another limitation is the limited scope of this study, which, due to its specific nature, does not allow the results to be applied in different contexts, which often happens in qualitative research.

We realise that our simple intervention is only a minor solution to the problem of teaching history in a didactic manner. We also understand that to promote an inquiry-oriented approach to teaching and learning, prospective teachers need to engage in a continuous series of complementary actions. This might help address several issues in teacher education, such as observation internships (Cheng et al., 2020), implementation issues (Chick & Corle, 2016), and various other teacher education dilemmas. Methods classes offering diverse, intense, and perhaps even well-structured activities, such as simulations, local history, and oral history, could successfully change social science norms using the C3 Framework. Through this research, which focuses on history teacher candidates' inquiry understanding and enhancement of understanding through a local history approach, we demonstrate one path that history teacher education can take towards a more inquiry-orientated direction.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study results, many prospective teachers put aside other aspects of history education and focus more on accumulating information as the main educational goal. They usually define student success as the ability to reproduce this information accurately and achieve high scores in exam-style evaluations. Such an idea, which some educators may consider a misconception, has proved difficult to change. This is mainly because many prospective teachers have become accustomed to more conventional education methods, which their teacher education programmes consider suboptimal. Consequently, it becomes imperative to cultivate an array of teaching strategies within the classroom environment, enabling future educators to contemplate diverse pedagogical techniques and assessment methods beyond mere memorisation and recitation, often measured by multiple-choice examinations. The local history methods classroom should serve as a hub where strategies for inquiry-based learning are systematically employed, woven into the fabric of teaching, and tailored to address the particular demands of local history pedagogy. Local histories have the potential to enhance the effectiveness of learning methods as they can provide simulations of authentic and relevant enquiry into previously unexplored and motivating issues. One of the major challenges in teacher education, especially in local history, is achieving coherence between theoretical lectures, course content, and field teaching practice placements with an inquiry-based approach underpinned by education research and supporting national education reform.

Implementing inquiry-focused teaching research programmes, especially in theory classes, is a potential approach to addressing coherence challenges in teacher education. Creating case examples appropriate to inquiry methodology could enrich high school-level teaching with examples specifically designed to evaluate their effectiveness in building an inquiry understanding in the theory classroom. Trials also need to be conducted to assess how much the method can promote understanding in a limited time, for example, within 15 meetings of a theory course. In teaching theory courses, a dynamic and holistic commitment is required. Optimism lies in the transformative potential of inquiry methods to reshape history pedagogy in secondary education. This article discusses the limitations of teacher education,

focuses on the practice of realising contemporary educational reform ideals, and highlights the contribution of research in this arena. The success of this endeavour depends on the ability of researchers to carefully design experiments, determine appropriate methodologies (such as local history investigations) that can integrate inquiry-based teaching into theoretical courses, and carry out rigorous scientific research to ascertain the effectiveness of the technique in enhancing the practical expertise of history educators.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

AS conceptualized the study, designed the research framework, conducted data analysis, and drafted the manuscript. JW contributed to data collection, validation, and interpretation of findings. YI assisted in methodology development and data analysis. LJ provided critical revisions and contributed to theoretical framework development. AR contributed to literature review and final editing of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors declare that this research was prepared, researched, written, and edited without the aid of artificial intelligence (AI) techniques.

* Arif Saefudin (Corresponding Author)

UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta,
Jl. Ir. H. Juanda No. 95, Kelurahan Cempaka Putih, Kota Tangerang Selatan, Banten, Indonesia
Email: arifsae@uinjkt.ac.id

Johan Wahyudhi

UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta,
Jl. Ir. H. Juanda No. 95, Kelurahan Cempaka Putih, Kota Tangerang Selatan, Banten, Indonesia
Email: johan.wahyudi@uinjkt.ac.id

Yusran Ilyas

UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta,
Jl. Ir. H. Juanda No. 95, Kelurahan Cempaka Putih, Kota Tangerang Selatan, Banten, Indonesia
Email: yusran.ilyas@uinjkt.ac.id

Loso Judijanto

IPOS Jakarta,
Email: losu.judijanto@gmail.com

Yusran Ilyas

University of Goettingen,
Wilhelmsplatz 1, 37073 Göttingen, Jerman
Email: yusran.ilyas@uni-goettingen.de

Appendix A

Questions for initial and final evaluations on inquiry-based learning and local history:

1. Tell e about your personal experience in learning and understanding history when you were at school.
2. Do you think history lessons play a role in preparing students to become mature citizens? If so, explain how history contributes to this preparation process.
3. In your opinion, what are the most efficient learning methods for students to use?
4. Can the study of history hone critical thinking skills? If so, please indicate what thinking skills are involved.
5. Explain your definition of "inquiry learning" using your phrases.
6. Based on your comprehension of inquiry-based learning, how would you describe its function in the context of history education?
7. Do you perceive a connection between utilising inquiry-based learning and cultivating historical thinking skills? Kindly elaborate on your viewpoint concerning this association.
8. Which critical thinking abilities do you believe are bolstered by engaging in inquiry-based learning?
9. How would you characterise "local history", and do you consider the instruction of local history to render historical content more pertinent to students of varying backgrounds? If affirmative, please expound on your rationale.

Appendix B

The full list of students' answers to the pre-test questions: "What does inquiry mean to you?":

1. An educative process initiated by curiosity and inquiry from the students themselves.
2. A learning method that favours the creation of questions by students rather than providing answers.
3. Inquiry occurs when students acquire knowledge through the process of asking their questions.
4. In inquiry learning, students explore material by asking questions about the studied subject.
5. Inquiry learning centres the educational process on students, encouraging them to make their discoveries and understand through questioning.
6. An inquiry-based learning approach involves developing and pursuing answers to questions posed.
7. Knowledge acquisition occurs through the process of enquiry and question formulation.
8. A learning process where students are encouraged to formulate and explore their questions.
9. An educational method that uses questions as the primary foundation for discovering information.
10. Learning in an interactive way where questions are an important part of the educational process.
11. The attainment of knowledge by actively asking and exploring questions.
12. The process of searching and extracting information relies on questions as the main tool.

Appendix C

A summary of the student's definitions of inquiry, as provided in their responses to the post-test inquiry, is as follows:

1. Inquiry-based learning facilitates an active information search by students through question formulation and the discovery of answers.
2. Teaching methods presenting issues or scenarios allow students to draw conclusions.
3. Inquiry learning involves leveraging questions to explore existing knowledge and analyse primary materials.
4. An approach in which pupils navigate their educational journey through formulating and resolving their queries.
5. Scholars autonomously gather information by generating questions and undertaking investigative inquiries.
6. Inquiry learning involves the pursuit and resolution of student-identified questions of importance.
7. A problem-solving method where learners employ available materials to investigate and satisfy their curiosities.
8. Students uncover learning materials through investigative processes and conclude the resources at hand.
9. Learners employ self-generated questions to pursue knowledge, answer these queries, and engage in reflection.
10. Inquiry learning entails the examination of sources and evidence to formulate conclusions.
11. Students can respond to their inquiries and critically think during historical education.
12. Teaching strategies that allow students to learn based on prior knowledge and through question-oriented activities.