

How to Make History More Interesting

Motivation for research

While reading history books for young students, we saw that many reviewers commented, "Although history can be a boring subject, this book teaches history in a fun way." Also, many of our friends complained about having to learn about boring history.

After hearing this, we wanted to find out how students could get more interested in learning history by surveying the students in our elementary school. Along with this student survey, we also conducted a survey for teachers to find out the difference between the opinions of the lecturers and learners.

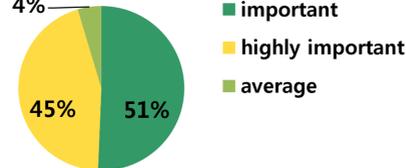
Preliminary research

Recently, after the Ministry of Education issued controversial state-authored history textbooks, a Korean newspaper found that 95.4% of parents surveyed thought that learning history is important for students.

In addition, an English education institute, Yoons English School, conducted a survey of 569 elementary and middle school parents nationwide, focusing on the favored method of studying history. It showed 39.3% of parents preferred going on field trips to museums, followed by reading educational comics and magazines (23.8%) and listening to online lectures (20.4%).

However, despite the parents' opinion, many students consider history to be boring and unnecessary. We decided to look into the students' opinion toward learning history.

How important is it for your children to learn history?



Source: Kids Hankook Ilbo(Newspaper) surveyed (2016. 12)
<http://kids.hankooki.com/lpage/news/201612/kd20161219153733125630.htm>

Primary research goal & Method

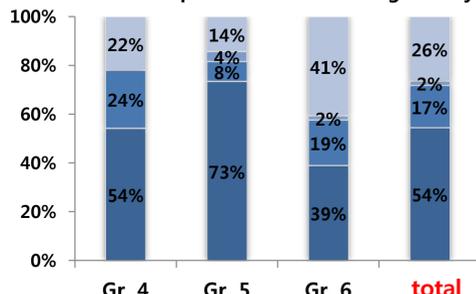
▶ Primary research goal: Find what students think about studying history, and what they think is the best way to study history

▶ Research subject: 167 students in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades at Seoul *** Elementary School

▶ Research method: Survey

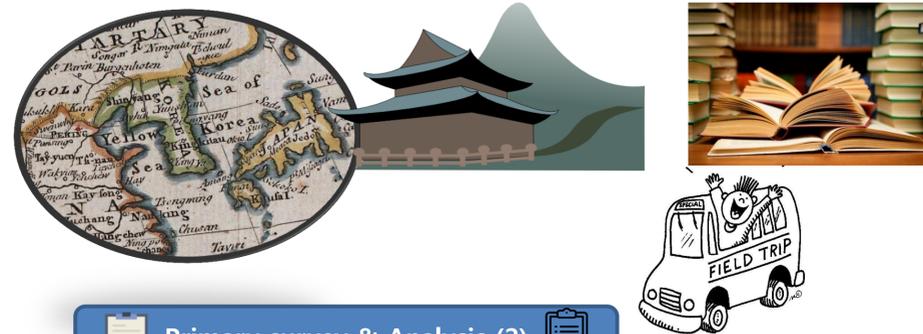
Primary survey & Analysis (1)

Students' opinions about learning history



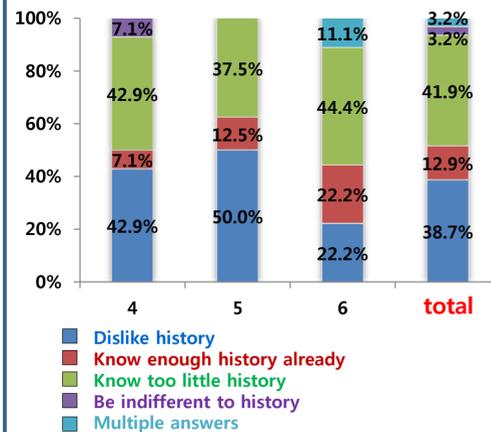
54 percent of those surveyed had positive opinions about learning history and they were mostly interested in legends and historical events. Among those with negative opinions of history, 26 percent of the students were indifferent about learning history. 17 percent responded that learning history is boring because they don't like history and they already know the lesson contents.

This survey showed indifference about learning history is a more serious problem than we expected. Students start to learn history from the fifth grade, and they show much more interest than other groups.



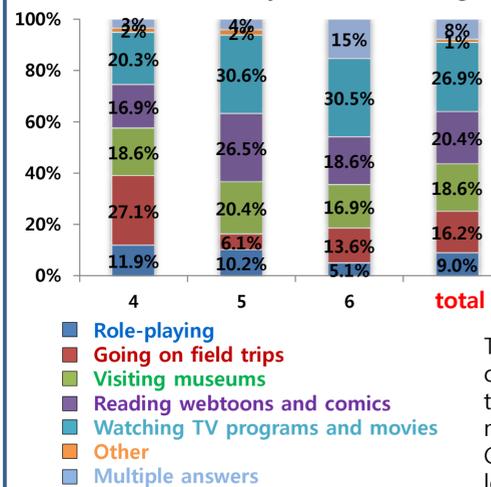
Primary survey & Analysis (2)

Why students feel negatively about history



5th grade students are very unfamiliar with history so they answered they feel bored and pressured. They realized that they don't have much knowledge about history when they started taking history class. The most interesting part of this survey was of the 6th graders, 44.4 percent replied they are not interested in history at all. This may be because they learn history mostly based on textbooks and teachers' lectures and don't have enough firsthand opportunities to participate in class.

How to make history more interesting

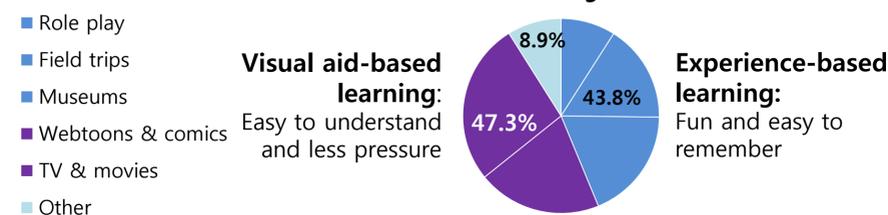


For the question how to make history more interesting, watching TV programs and movies turned out to be the most popular (26.9 percent), followed by reading webtoons and comic books. This was because TV programs and movies are interesting and easy to understand for students. This enabled them to remember the story or events well long term.

The 4th grade favored activities which can be experienced firsthand, like field trips, watching TV programs and movies, followed by visiting museums. Compared to the older group, the lower grader's group were positive about experience-based learning.

The 5th and 6th grades preferred visiting museums over field trips, and the percentage of 5th and 6th grade students who chose webtoons and comic books was greater than 4th graders. There was no difference between genders.

Reasons for choosing each method

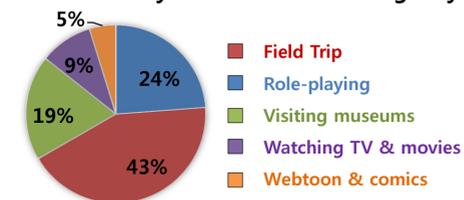


Secondary research goal & Method

- ▶ Secondary research goal: Find teachers' opinion about learning history
- ▶ Research subject: 20 teachers in Seoul *** Elementary School
- ▶ Research method: Survey

Secondary research & Analysis

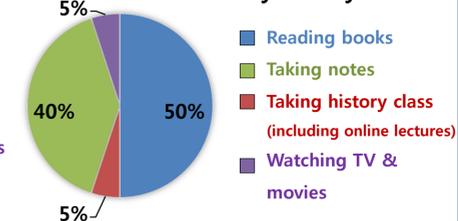
Teachers' opinion on how students can learn history in a more interesting way



The teachers replied field trips (43 percent) are the most interesting way to learn history for students. Students can actually feel, see, explore and experience history to learn it more easily.

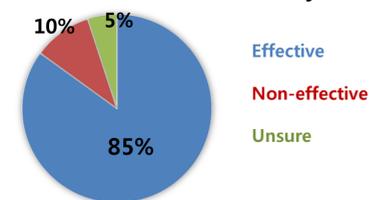
In addition, teachers also preferred using role-play because students could have first-hand experience.

Most effective way that teachers used to study history



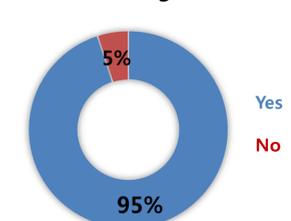
When studying history as students, teachers read books (50 percent), followed by summarizing with notes (40 percent), but the surveyed students wanted to learn through actual experience.

Is watching TV or movies an effective way to learn history?



Teachers agreed with students that TV and movies can be an effective way to learn even though teachers chose reading books as the most effective way they learned history as students.

Does each grade need different learning methods?



Lastly, teachers agreed on setting a different learning method by grade.

Conclusions & Suggestions

- In conclusion, hands-on experience and field learning should be accompanied by a differentiated curriculum by grade.
- Generally, students preferred watching TV programs or movies. Historical dramas and movies are easily understood. However, students should be careful using this as a main learning content, and it needs teachers' comments and explanation.
- Also, the curriculum for the 4th grades, should include more frequent field trips as the survey results showed. In addition, 5th, and 6th graders need a lot more opportunities to participate in class. With watching TV programs, movies, dramas, or webtoons, an in-class discussion should follow.
- Because teachers pointed out reading books was most efficient for them, students should organize the information with books after watching TV programs and movies.
- Setting a variety of different learning methods is important and makes more opportunities for the students to participate for themselves. This can lead students to pay more attention while learning.
- The creation and distribution of educational history programs should be done by the Ministry of Education and teachers systematically.
- At the same time, visual aids should be used more often in the upper grades for their visual curiosity and attention.
- When using visual aids, teachers should fully discuss the fictional parts and the contents to help students understand the right information.

Personal opinion & Future research plan

- Personally we expect more educational applications or programs equipped with augmented reality will be used for in-class and on-site learning in the future.
- A variety of virtual reality images that are geared toward students' preferences and expectations should be created.
- We should investigate the accurate reason for the high rate of indifference toward learning history.
- Based on the students' responses, we would like to conduct a survey of more students for more accurate data and perform an experiment on the effectiveness of watching TV programs and movies related to historical events.