

**OPEN ACCESS**

SUBMITTED 27 September 2025

ACCEPTED 19 October 2025

PUBLISHED 23 November 2025

VOLUME Vol.05 Issue11 2025

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Stimulating Students' Creative Thinking By Using Role-Playing Games Such As "Virtual Interview" And "Blogging" In The Study Of Historical Figures

Tursunova Sevarxon Umarovna

Independent Researcher, Namangan, State Pedagogical Institute, Uzbekistan

Abstract: This article analyzes the methodology for developing students' creative thinking in teaching history in grades 7-8 of general secondary schools by applying modern pedagogical technologies such as "Virtual Interview" and "Historical Figure's Blog," as opposed to traditional methods. The research uses practical examples to highlight the positive impact of these methods on students' interest in the subject, their sense of historical empathy, and their independent thinking skills. The results of the experimental trial have shown that such interactive role-playing games are an effective tool for transitioning from mere memorization of educational material to its creative assimilation.

Keywords: Creative thinking, history lessons, role-playing games, virtual interview, historical figure's blog, pedagogical technology, interactive method, 7th grade, 8th grade, empathy.

Introduction: The globalization of the education system and the rapid development of information technologies are setting new tasks for the modern school. The main demand of today is not just to provide students with a set of knowledge, but to form in them vital competencies such as critical and creative thinking and the ability to make independent decisions in non-standard situations [1]. The reforms in the education sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan are also aimed at these very aspects, in particular, at realizing the creative potential of the young generation. In this process, social sciences, especially the subject of history, play a special role. History not only acquaints the student with the past but also sharpens their thinking by analyzing it,

finding cause-and-effect relationships, and drawing conclusions from historical experience.

However, it is no secret that in practice, history lessons often rely on memorizing information, which turns the student into a passive object and stifles their creative initiatives [4]. Especially for 7th-8th grade students in their adolescence, the historical figures in textbooks often seem like "lifeless heroes," and understanding their activities poses a challenge. For this reason, introducing innovative pedagogical technologies into the educational process that activate the student and turn them into a direct participant is a pressing scientific and pedagogical problem [5]. As a result of this process, historical figures transform from "lifeless images" in the textbook into real people—living, full of contradictions, sometimes making mistakes, and sometimes performing great deeds. Babur's longing for his homeland will no longer be just a quote from the "Baburnama," but will become a feeling that the student can experience themselves. This dramatically increases the level of comprehension and ensures long-term retention in memory.

METHODS

The problem of developing creative thinking has always been an object of research in pedagogical science. Uzbek scholars such as U.K. Tolipov, M. Usmanbayeva [8], R.J. Ishmuhamedov [5], and others have extensively illuminated the didactic possibilities of interactive methods and pedagogical technologies in the development of the student's personality in their works. The theoretical and practical issues of history teaching methodology have been researched by scholars like Sh. Turayev [3] and H. Ziyoyev [4]. In foreign experience, special attention is paid to the formation of creativity within the framework of the "21st Century Skills" concept [2]. Researchers like J.L. Endacott and J. Sturtz have scientifically substantiated in their works that it is possible to develop "historical empathy"—the ability to understand the feelings and views of people in the past—by putting the student in the place of a historical figure [6]. However, there is a lack of systematic research on the impact of role-playing games associated with digital technologies, specifically "Virtual Interview" and "Blogging," on students' creative thinking in the study of historical figures' activities.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

A fundamental question lies at the methodological core of this research: is stimulating students' creative thinking in history lessons merely a way to make the lesson interesting, or is it a strategic tool for solving the urgent tasks facing modern education? In traditional educational practice, the activity of a historical figure

is often presented as an unchangeable, final set of truths. Information about the campaigns of Sahibkiran Amir Timur, the scientific heritage of Mirzo Ulugbek, or the bravery of Jalaliddin Manguberdi is mainly loaded into the student's memory as a sequence of facts and dates. This process is reproductive in nature, leaving the student in the role of a passive consumer of knowledge. Such an approach limits the student's cognitive activity to the lower levels of Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy—remembering and understanding [4]. As a result, the student cannot deeply analyze the complex motives behind a historical figure's decisions, the contradictions of their era, their personal experiences, and alternative possibilities. This, in turn, leads to a superficial, formal attitude towards the subject and, ultimately, a sharp decline in motivation.

It is precisely at this point that the pedagogical value of role-playing games like "Virtual Interview" and "Historical Figure's Blog" becomes apparent. These methods are not merely decorative elements that adorn the lesson, but powerful didactic tools that shift the educational paradigm from reproductive to productive (creative) [5]. The essence of this transformation can be revealed through several fundamental aspects:

First, the integration of cognitive and affective domains. Role-playing games transform the student from an indifferent observer of historical reality into an emotional participant. When a student imagines themselves as a journalist interviewing Jalaliddin Manguberdi, who is trying to unite the people amidst the Mongol invasion, or as a person blogging on behalf of Mirzo Ulugbek, who is misunderstood by his contemporaries for his discoveries, affective (emotional) processes are added to cognitive (mental) processes. The student tries to "feel" not only the actions of the historical figure but also their emotions, hopes, fears, and doubts. This encourages the student to pass historical facts through the prism of their personal experience and emotions, and as researchers J. Endacott and J. Sturtz [6] point out, it forms "historical empathy"—the ability to understand people of the past from the perspective of their own time. Creative thinking is nourished precisely by this empathy, the ability to put oneself in another's shoes and look at reality from a non-standard angle.

Second, stimulating creative inquiry through a problematic situation. These role-playing games place the student in a problematic situation with no ready-made answers. The "journalist" preparing questions for a "Virtual Interview" will try to formulate unexpected, sharp, and even provocative questions for the sake of their reputation ("Sahibkiran, they call you a great builder, but some historians also say your campaigns caused great destruction. How do you respond to

that?"). The student in the role of the "historical figure" cannot simply answer, "it's written so in the textbook." They must find a logically sound, convincing answer based on their character's worldview, personality, and the logic of the era. This process requires the student to use both convergent and divergent thinking simultaneously, which is the basis of creativity [8].

Third, transforming knowledge and creating a new intellectual product. The "Blogging" method creates a unique opportunity to develop a student's ability to synthesize and interpret. To write a blog post, the student gathers scattered information from various sources (textbook, scientific literature, internet, documentary film), evaluates its reliability (critical thinking), analyzes it, and on this basis, creates their own cohesive, original text. They do not simply narrate a historical event but explain it to their "subscribers" (classmates) in an understandable, interesting, and modern language. For example, they might analyze Amir Timur's favor to Tokhtamysh and its consequences in the context of today's "geopolitical games" or "abuse of trust." This process teaches the student not just to assimilate historical information, but to process it, connect it with modern reality (contextualize), and express a personal attitude towards it. This means creating a new intellectual product, as opposed to simply repeating knowledge.

Thus, the "Virtual Interview" and "Blogging" methods free students from the tedious task of memorizing history and encourage them to "recreate" historical reality and "rediscover" its meanings. In this process, while remembering facts, they also understand the motives of historical figures, imagine alternative developments of events, and form their own personal, well-founded conclusions. This not only serves to deepen the learning of history [3] but also ensures the student's development as a creative, critically thinking individual capable of finding non-standard solutions to complex problems. Therefore, integrating these methods into history lessons is fully consistent with the tasks set for the modernization of Uzbekistan's education system [1] and is one of the most effective and promising ways to ensure their future competitiveness by forming "21st-century skills" [2, 7] in students.

CONCLUSION

The modern paradigm of history education demands the transformation of the student from a passive listener who simply memorizes facts into an active and creative subject who can analyze historical processes and learn lessons from past experiences. The theoretical analysis conducted shows that traditional, reproductive methods have limited potential in

unlocking students' creative potential and often extinguish their interest in the subject.

In such conditions, the integration of interactive methods based on role-playing games like "Virtual Interview" and "Historical Figure's Blog" into the learning process demonstrates high pedagogical effectiveness. This approach encourages the student to enter the image of a historical hero, forming "historical empathy" that helps them to feel reality deeply. As a result, historical figures "come alive," and the lesson process becomes an interesting and motivating activity for adolescents through game elements. Most importantly, these methods direct the student away from repeating ready-made knowledge towards independently searching for, critically selecting, analyzing, and creating new, original intellectual products (questions, blog posts, discussions) based on information. This process simultaneously develops a complex of "21st-century skills" in the student, such as independent research, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Thus, the researched methods can be evaluated not only as a way to improve the quality of history teaching but also as an effective tool for fostering a competitive individual who can meet the demands of modern life, serving the student's personal development and enriching their thinking.

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