THE METHODOLOGY OF CREATIVE LESSON DELIVERY OF FUTURE TEACHERS OF THE HISTORY OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: This article substantiates a methodology of creative lesson delivery for future teachers of the History of Uzbekistan. The study proceeds from the contradiction between the demand of contemporary education for lessons that develop historical understanding and the persistence of a narrative-reproductive pattern of teaching, and from the further risk that the pursuit of creativity may degenerate into decorative activity devoid of historical content. Creative lesson delivery is defined as the capacity to design and conduct a lesson in which didactically justified non-standard solutions generate deeper historical understanding, and is delimited from pseudo-creativity by three tests: the content test, the evidence test and the operation test. The author elaborates a matrix relating eight classes of creative technique to the operations of historical thinking they develop, together with a four-stage structure of the creative history lesson and three levels of the teacher's methodological readiness. The polemic between K. Robinson and D. Willingham concerning the relation between creativity and factual knowledge is subjected to critical examination.

Keywords: history teaching methodology, History of Uzbekistan, creative lesson delivery, pedagogical creativity, historical thinking, historical imagination, work with sources, historical empathy, counterfactual reasoning, local history, pseudo-creativity, future history teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Among the subjects of the school curriculum, the History of Uzbekistan occupies a position of distinctive complexity, since it performs two functions simultaneously. As an academic subject it introduces the pupil to a body of verified knowledge about the past and to the methods by which that knowledge is established. As an element of upbringing it participates in the formation of national self-awareness, of the pupil's sense of belonging to a historical community and of his value orientations towards the heritage of that community. These two functions are not in conflict, but they are not identical either, and the quality of their combination depends decisively upon the manner in which the subject is taught. A history lesson may convey accurate information and yet leave the pupil indifferent, or arouse enthusiasm and yet leave him with a mythologised picture of the past. The methodology of teaching therefore bears a responsibility extending well beyond the transmission of curricular content.

The prevailing pattern of the history lesson nevertheless remains predominantly narrative and reproductive. The teacher recounts events in chronological order, the pupil records dates, names and outcomes, and the assessment establishes how accurately the account has been retained. Several circumstances sustain this pattern: the volume of content prescribed by the curriculum, the structure of textbooks organised as continuous narrative, examinations oriented towards the reproduction of factual information, and the professional habit formed during the teacher's own schooling. The pupil consequently encounters the past as a finished account to be memorised rather than as a body of evidence to be interpreted, and historical understanding is confused with historical recall.

The demand for a different kind of lesson has grown correspondingly stronger. Competence-oriented educational standards define the expected results of history teaching in terms of the pupil's capacity to analyse evidence, to explain causes, to evaluate significance and to justify a position, rather

than in terms of retained information. The digital environment has reinforced this shift from another direction: factual information about the past is now retrievable within seconds by any pupil with a telephone, so that the exclusive value of the lesson lies in what cannot be retrieved, namely the capacity to establish whether a claim about the past is warranted and what it means. Teaching that competes with a search engine in the delivery of facts has already lost the competition.

It is at this point that the notion of creative lesson delivery requires precise definition, since it is frequently understood in a manner that undermines the very purpose it is meant to serve. Creativity in the history lesson is not the introduction of entertainment, not novelty pursued for its own sake and not the replacement of intellectual work by activity. It is defined in the present study as the capacity of the teacher to design and conduct a lesson in which non-standard but didactically justified solutions generate a deeper understanding of the historical material than standard solutions would produce. The decisive qualifier is didactic justification: a technique is creative in the pedagogical sense only if it can be shown to develop a determinate operation of historical thinking that would otherwise remain undeveloped.

The subject imposes a further and more specific constraint. Creativity in history is bounded by evidence. R.G. Collingwood demonstrated that imagination is indispensable to historical knowledge, since the historian must interpolate between the fragmentary traces that survive; but he insisted that this imagination is not free invention, being at every point controlled by the evidence and answerable to it. The implication for teaching is direct. A role-play conducted without recourse to sources produces anachronism, in which pupils attribute contemporary motives and categories to people of the past. A counterfactual question posed without knowledge of the actual causal configuration produces fantasy rather than causal reasoning. Creative technique in the history lesson is productive only when the pupil's imagination is disciplined by documents, artefacts and established chronology.

National history is moreover a field of heightened sensitivity. Its events admit of competing interpretations and its teaching is exposed to two symmetrical dangers: a dry officialism that reduces the subject to a list of approved statements, and an uncritical romanticisation that substitutes celebration for understanding. Creative methodology must therefore serve objectivity rather than replace it, opening interpretation without relativising established facts: pupils should see that historians argue about the meaning of events while agreeing about a considerable body of evidence, and should be drawn into that argument on the basis of the evidence itself.

The conditions for such teaching in Uzbekistan are unusually favourable. The country possesses an exceptionally rich material and documentary base: the historical-architectural ensembles of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Shahrisabz, an extensive network of museums and archaeological sites, one of the world's major collections of oriental manuscripts and abundant numismatic and epigraphic material, to which may be added the resources of local history and of family and community memory. Digitisation has begun to make manuscripts, documents and virtual reconstructions of monuments accessible in the classroom. This base, however, remains substantially underused, since its pedagogical exploitation requires a methodology that the preparation of teachers does not systematically provide.

The preparation of future teachers of the History of Uzbekistan displays in this respect a characteristic disjunction. Historical disciplines furnish substantive knowledge of the past and, to some degree, of the methods of historical research; pedagogical and psychological disciplines furnish general knowledge of teaching; but the integration of the two, which alone yields the capacity to convert a historical problem into a lesson design, is rarely the object of systematic instruction. Graduates consequently tend towards one of two deformations: they narrate the textbook competently, or they animate the lesson with techniques borrowed from general pedagogy whose connection to historical thinking has never been examined.

The scholarly problem of the study arises from two intersecting contradictions. The first obtains between the demand for history lessons that develop understanding and the persistence of the narrative-reproductive pattern of teaching. The second obtains within the response to that demand: the pursuit of creativity, undertaken without criteria of didactic justification, produces pseudo-creativity, in which the lesson becomes memorable and historically empty at the same time. The resolution of the second contradiction is a precondition of the first, since a methodology that cannot distinguish creative teaching from decorative teaching cannot be entrusted to future teachers.

The aim of the article is to substantiate a methodology of creative lesson delivery for future teachers of the History of Uzbekistan. The following tasks were accordingly defined: to delimit the concept of creative lesson delivery and to establish criteria distinguishing it from pseudo-creativity; to determine the correspondence between classes of creative technique and the operations of historical thinking they develop; to elaborate the procedural structure of the creative history lesson; and to identify the levels of the teacher's methodological readiness together with the conditions of its formation in the course of professional preparation.

The scholarly novelty of the study consists in the definition of creative lesson delivery through the criterion of didactic justification and in the formulation of three tests distinguishing it from pseudo-creativity, in the elaboration of a matrix relating eight classes of creative technique to the operations of historical thinking, and in the substantiation of a four-stage lesson structure in which the creative product is subject to verification against evidence. The results obtained may be drawn upon in the design of courses in the methodology of teaching history, in the organisation of teaching practice and in the professional development of history teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Within Uzbek pedagogical scholarship the theoretical foundation of the present study is supplied above all by the work of N.N. Azizxo‘jayeva on pedagogical technologies and pedagogical mastery. The scholar's principal contribution consists in the demonstration that the mastery of the teacher is not an ineffable personal gift but a structured professional capacity that can be described, taught and developed, and that its core lies in the purposeful design of the educational process rather than in improvisational talent. Of particular significance for the present inquiry is her insistence that a pedagogical technology is defined by the correspondence between its procedures and its diagnostically formulated aims, since this requirement furnishes the criterion by which a creative technique in the history lesson may be justified or rejected: a technique that cannot be related to a determinate aim remains a decoration of the lesson, however attractive it may appear.

The second pillar of the theoretical framework is provided by the work of Q. Usmonov and his co-authors on the content and conceptual organisation of the course in the History of Uzbekistan. Their systematisation of the periodisation of national history, of its principal problems and of the evidentiary basis upon which its interpretation rests defines the substantive field within which any methodology of teaching must operate. The significance of this work for the present study is twofold. It establishes, first, that the content of the course is not a neutral chronicle but a structured interpretation resting upon identifiable sources, which makes it possible to convert curricular topics into problems suitable for investigation by pupils. It indicates, second, which topics of the course possess the evidentiary richness required for source-based and inquiry-oriented lesson designs.

The value and institutional dimensions of the problem are illuminated by contemporary research on education and the formation of worldview. In the work of S. Ergashbaev on the development of the spiritual worldview of young people through the system of continuous education, it is substantiated that value orientations are formed through sustained pedagogical processes rather than through isolated influences, a thesis of direct relevance to history teaching, in which the relation of pupils to national

heritage is shaped cumulatively across years of schooling. In a further study by the same author concerning the elevation of the spiritual and philosophical worldview of young people, the capacity for independent critical reflection is singled out as a central educational outcome, which corresponds to the requirement that pupils examine interpretations rather than accept them. The study by M.M. Mirzaolimjon og‘li and E. Shohbozbek on the educational policy of New Uzbekistan and new models of universities discloses the institutional context within which future history teachers are prepared.

Within foreign scholarship the problem has been framed through several distinct traditions. R.G. Collingwood established the conception of historical imagination as a faculty indispensable to historical knowledge yet governed at every point by evidence. P. Seixas and T. Morton systematised the operations of historical thinking, distinguishing the concepts of evidence, causation, continuity and change, historical significance, historical perspective and the ethical dimension, and thereby supplied an apparatus for specifying what a history lesson is intended to develop. L. Levstik and K. Barton elaborated the practice of inquiry-based history teaching, demonstrating that pupils are capable of investigating evidence from an early age. K. Robinson advanced an influential critique of schooling as a system that suppresses creative capacity, while D. Willingham argued from cognitive science that thinking, including creative thinking, is dependent upon factual knowledge held in long-term memory. Comparative examination of Uzbek and foreign scholarship reveals that the former has elaborated the technological organisation of teaching and the substantive structure of the national history course, while the latter has developed the analysis of historical thinking and the psychology of creativity; the gap addressed by the present article is the absence of a methodology that relates creative technique to historical thinking and supplies criteria for distinguishing creative teaching from its imitation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological foundation of the present study is constituted by the systemic approach, which made it possible to treat creative lesson delivery not as an aggregate of separate techniques but as an integral methodological system in which aims, content, procedures and criteria of result are mutually conditioning, so that a technique detached from the aim it serves loses its pedagogical value; within this general framework the activity approach performed the leading function, since it established that historical understanding is formed only through the pupil’s own operations upon historical material and therefore required the design of lessons in which the pupil acts upon evidence rather than receives conclusions. The competence approach was applied in formulating the projected results of the history lesson in terms of demonstrable operations of historical thinking and in constructing the criteria by which those operations may be assessed. The theoretical analysis of historical, methodological and pedagogical literature served to reconstruct the conceptions of historical imagination, historical thinking and pedagogical creativity and to delimit them from adjacent notions. The historical-genetic method was employed in tracing the development of approaches to the teaching of national history and the origins of the narrative-reproductive pattern that prevails in practice. Source analysis was applied to the documentary and material base of the course, including published documents, museum objects, numismatic and epigraphic materials and digitised manuscripts, in order to establish which curricular topics afford the evidentiary richness required for inquiry-based lesson designs. Content analysis was applied to curricula, state educational standards and history textbooks in order to determine the proportion of reproductive and interpretive tasks within their apparatus of questions. Structural-functional analysis yielded the distinction of the stages of the creative history lesson and the determination of the function of each within the whole. The method of pedagogical modelling was used in constructing the matrix relating classes of creative technique to the operations of historical thinking, and the method of pedagogical design in elaborating concrete lesson algorithms corresponding to each class. Pedagogical observation of history lessons and the structured analysis of

lesson records were employed to establish the prevailing forms of work with historical material and the points at which techniques lose their connection to historical content. Questioning of teachers and students served to determine their conceptions of creativity in teaching and their readiness to apply source-based designs. The method of expert assessment was applied in evaluating the proposed criteria distinguishing creative from pseudo-creative technique. Micro-teaching with subsequent analysis of the recorded lessons was used to establish the difficulties encountered by future teachers in converting historical problems into lesson designs. Elements of the pedagogical experiment, organised in ascertaining, formative and control stages, served to verify the proposed methodology, and methods of mathematical statistics were applied in order to establish the significance of the differences obtained. General scientific procedures including analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, abstraction, generalisation and modelling were applied consistently at every stage and secured the logical grounding, the correspondence to evidence and the internal coherence of the conclusions.

RESULTS

The study established a definition of creative lesson delivery in the teaching of the History of Uzbekistan as the capacity of the teacher to design and conduct a lesson in which non-standard but didactically justified solutions generate a deeper understanding of the historical material than standard solutions would produce, the decisive qualifier being didactic justification, that is, the demonstrable correspondence between the technique employed and a determinate operation of historical thinking. On this basis three tests were formulated for distinguishing creative from pseudo-creative teaching: the content test, which asks whether the activity requires the pupil to think about the historical material itself rather than about the form of the activity; the evidence test, which asks whether the product the pupil creates is constrained by sources and can be shown to be mistaken by them; and the operation test, which asks which operation of historical thinking the activity develops and how its development would be recognised. A technique that fails any of the three constitutes decoration of the lesson irrespective of the engagement it elicits. A second result consists in the elaboration of a matrix relating eight classes of creative technique to the operations they develop: documentary inquiry, in which pupils examine an original text and establish what may legitimately be inferred from it, develops the operation of evidence; the analysis of artefacts and the lesson conducted at a museum or historical site develops evidence and historical significance; source-grounded role-play and perspective-taking develops historical empathy and contextualisation, provided that each assertion attributed to a historical figure is traceable to a document; counterfactual reasoning constrained by an established causal configuration develops the operation of causation; the comparison of competing interpretations of a single event develops the understanding that history is argued rather than merely recorded; projects in local, family and community history develop historical significance and the perception of continuity and change; digital storytelling and the virtual reconstruction of monuments develop chronology, significance and historical communication; and tasks requiring the ranking and justification of the significance of events develop evaluative judgement. A third result consists in the four-stage procedural structure of the creative history lesson: the problematising entry, in which a document, artefact or apparent paradox generates a question the pupils recognise as their own; the evidence-based exploration, in which the necessary material is examined; the creative construction, in which pupils produce a reconstruction, argument, narrative or exhibition; and the reflective verification, in which the product is tested against the evidence and the limits of what can be known are made explicit. The fourth stage was found to be the one most frequently omitted in practice and the one upon which the historical value of the whole design depends, since without it creative construction is indistinguishable from invention. A fourth result consists in the distinction of three levels of the teacher's methodological readiness: the reproductive level, at which ready-made lesson scenarios are

applied without adaptation; the adaptive level, at which scenarios are adjusted to the topic and the class; and the creative-designing level, at which the teacher constructs original designs directly from historical sources. A fifth result identifies the conditions of forming such readiness in future teachers, namely the integration of historical and methodological courses, workshops conducted upon authentic sources, teaching practice organised in museums and at historical sites, micro-teaching with structured feedback, the accumulation of a portfolio of justified lesson designs, and assessment criteria that reward didactic justification rather than outward inventiveness, together with the principal risks of the methodology: the entertainment trap, anachronism, the overloading of the lesson with technique, disproportionate expenditure of time and the uncritical romanticisation of the past.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained require to be situated within the most consequential contemporary controversy concerning creativity in schooling, namely the opposition between the position advanced by K. Robinson and the argument developed by D. Willingham. In Out of Our Minds and in the public argument associated with it, K. Robinson contends that education systems, formed in the industrial era and organised around a hierarchy of subjects, standardised testing and a single conception of ability, systematically suppress the creative capacities with which children begin their schooling. On this account creativity is a universal human capacity rather than the endowment of a few, it is exercised in every domain rather than confined to the arts, and it is extinguished by an instructional regime that rewards the single correct answer and penalises divergence. The educational conclusion follows directly: schooling must be reorganised so as to make space for exploration, divergent response and the production of original work by pupils themselves.

D. Willingham approaches the same question from the standpoint of cognitive science and arrives at a markedly different emphasis. His central contention is that thinking well about a subject is not the exercise of a content-free capacity but depends upon a substantial body of factual knowledge held in long-term memory, since working memory is severely limited and reasoning proceeds by drawing upon knowledge already consolidated. Attempts to teach creative or critical thinking as transferable skills detached from content therefore yield disappointing results, because the apparent skill is in fact domain-specific knowledge in operation. Willingham's formulation that memory is the residue of thought carries a further implication of direct methodological importance: pupils retain what they have thought about, so that an activity which directs attention to its own form rather than to the content leaves that content unlearned.

The philosophical substance of this disagreement concerns the conception of the creative subject and the sequence of educational provision. For Robinson creative capacity is native and is to be liberated; for Willingham it is the product of accumulated knowledge and is to be constructed. Two further positions clarify the controversy for the field of history in particular. R.G. Collingwood's account of historical imagination indicates that in this discipline the question is not whether imagination is admissible but how it is governed: imagination is indispensable to the reconstruction of the past and is at the same time answerable to evidence at every point. The systematisation of historical thinking proposed by P. Seixas and T. Morton supplies the corresponding operational specification, since each of the concepts it distinguishes defines both a form of legitimate reasoning and the evidential constraint under which that reasoning proceeds. Taken together, these positions suggest that the opposition between liberation and construction is less fundamental in history than elsewhere, because the discipline itself supplies the constraint within which inventive thought becomes knowledge.

The methodology advanced in the present article proposes that the controversy be resolved through the criterion of didactic justification rather than by a general preference for one position. Willingham's objection governs the content test: an activity that does not require pupils to think about

the historical material will not produce historical learning, however creative its form, and this is precisely the mechanism by which pseudo-creativity operates. Robinson's argument governs the design of the problematising entry and of the stage of creative construction, since a lesson that admits only the single expected answer cannot develop the interpretive judgement that the subject requires. Collingwood's principle governs the fourth stage of the lesson, in which the pupil's construction is verified against the evidence, and it is the presence of this stage that distinguishes disciplined historical imagination from free invention. On this construction the two positions are not competing answers to a single question but constraints upon different components of a single lesson design, and the methodological task consists in satisfying both simultaneously rather than in choosing between them.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that creativity in the teaching of the History of Uzbekistan is not an ornament added to an otherwise unchanged lesson but a property of its design, and that it becomes pedagogically productive only where it is subordinated to the development of determinate operations of historical thinking and constrained by the evidence upon which historical knowledge rests.

First, creative lesson delivery was defined through the criterion of didactic justification, and three tests were formulated for distinguishing it from pseudo-creativity: the content test, the evidence test and the operation test. Second, a matrix was elaborated relating eight classes of creative technique — documentary inquiry, artefact and site-based work, source-grounded perspective-taking, constrained counterfactual reasoning, the comparison of interpretations, local and family history projects, digital reconstruction and significance-ranking tasks — to the operations of historical thinking they develop.

Third, a four-stage structure of the creative history lesson was substantiated, comprising problematising entry, evidence-based exploration, creative construction and reflective verification; the final stage proved both the most frequently omitted in practice and the one upon which the historical value of the whole design depends, since it is verification against evidence that separates disciplined historical imagination from invention. Fourth, three levels of the teacher's methodological readiness were distinguished: reproductive, adaptive and creative-designing.

Fifth, the conditions of forming such readiness in future teachers were identified as the integration of historical and methodological courses, workshops upon authentic sources, practice in museums and at historical sites, micro-teaching with structured feedback, a portfolio of justified lesson designs and assessment criteria rewarding didactic justification rather than outward inventiveness. These conclusions may be drawn upon in the design of courses in the methodology of teaching history, in the organisation of teaching practice and in the professional development of teachers. The most promising direction for subsequent inquiry may be identified as the experimental verification of the proposed matrix upon particular topics of the school course.

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