

# **Different methods to making History teaching more effective and interesting**

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## **Objective –**

To explore the different methods of teaching to making History teaching more effective, creative and interesting

## **Description-**

After spending a good time with the teachers and students in Sirohi district through Foundations work, spending time in museums during my thesis research work, discussing and facilitating college students of Govt MLB collage Bhoapl, the common notion observed about History teaching among the teachers is that it is a boring subject to teach and there is very less space to make it creative and student friendly, on the other hand NCF 2005 Position paper of Social Science says “The teaching of Social Sciences must adopt methods that promote creativity, aesthetics, and critical perspectives.” So in the process of making history teaching meaningful and creative, I have decided to explore different pedagogical tool in history teaching. So it can be used as experiential journey during treating History teaching with the teachers that how can they use different methods, activities in History class and make this subject more productive, interesting, creative and alive.

## **Methodology for Research:**

In this research work the empirical and Action research process has been followed. As the section of the empirical research- discussion, interview, observation during teaching, museum and field visits has been used as method and some case proper teaching and facilitation has been used as a method.

## **Method 1 -Drama and Role Play as a method of History teaching**

The aim of study to explore creative drama as pedagogy in history teaching through process research. It has been mentioned in NCF 2005 position paper of Social Science that “Social Sciences must adopt methods that promote creativity, aesthetics, and critical perspectives, and enable children to draw relationships between past and present, to understand changes taking place in the society.” So the research tried to explore the possibility of creative drama as a pedagogy in history teaching. For the study, proper teaching has been done in the classroom of the two upper primary government schools of the Sheoganj block of the Sirohi district and qualitative analysis was done through observation and assessment tool. And in later phase, it would be shared with the teachers as an experience journey so that they can use creative drama as a pedagogical tool in history teaching to make subject more creative, student friendly and meaningful.

Creative Drama – A common understanding - *Creative drama is an effective educational tool in contemporary education.<sup>2</sup> is the “process”, on learning, creativity, and discovery for its own sake use of theatrical elements and dramatic exploration in the classroom to support students’ natural tendency to learn through play. Creative drama is Informal, Imaginative, and Process-Centered. It upholds Process (series of planned drama-games-activities-exercises) and child centeredness. This is not performance based. It gives space to the child to express. Child develops her or his cognitive skills during the process of drama. Involving the mental act of imagination transformation, creative drama is a phase of improvised dramatic situations, as stimulated in children.<sup>1</sup>*

Using the skills and techniques of the creative arts is an effective way of developing learning regarding historical interpretations – one of the mandatory components of history. How does it affect History teaching? It would comprehensively work on the mental skills of critical and analytical thinking of students. Apart from developing these skills, it would also be very useful in the different approaches of History teaching, for example the inquiry method. It is already established that creative drama is one of the good pedagogical tool to teach history. The research is a way hands no experience of teaching history through creative drama in govt. school. So this journey of experience can be used by teachers to make history meaningfully creative in schools.

## Rationale-

NCF 2005 Position paper of Social Science says “Social Science teaching needs to be revitalized towards helping the learner acquire knowledge and skills in an interactive environment. The teaching of Social Sciences must adopt methods that promote creativity, aesthetics, and critical perspectives, and enable children to draw relationships between past and present, to understand changes taking place in the society. Problem solving, dramatization and role play are some hitherto under explored strategies that could be employed.”<sup>2</sup> “In order to make the process of learning participative, there is a need to shift from mere imparting of information to debate and discussion. This approach to learning will keep both the learner and the teacher alive to social realities. Drama supremely involves the pupils’ imagination. It forces them to think actively, logically and emotionally about the human situations, problems and challenges that they encounter in unfolding scenarios. History provides the substantive, factual framework of information where pupils could bring the past alive through drama and role play. As such, Drama develops possibilistic open-ended and creative thinking which makes links and connections and enables children to deepen their understanding of historical events and the individuals who people the historical stage. It is this depth and variety historical stage. It is this depth and variety that produces high level pupil thinking and language skills.”<sup>3</sup> these all references talking about the importance of drama in Social Science. After spending a good time with the teachers and students in Sirohi district through Foundation’s work, the common notion observed about History teaching among the teachers is that it is a boring subject to teach and there is very less space to make it creative and student friendly. So in the process of making history teaching meaningful and creative, I have decided the research explores creative drama as a pedagogical tool in history teaching.

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CREATIVE DRAMATICS AS AN EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL TOOL IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION:  
A PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSE Samuel Okoronkwo Chukwu-Okoronkwo

Methodology –

The sample size of the study is two government Upper primary schools of Sheoganj block, where the numbers of students in class is 19 and 25. Class VI has been considered for study. Detailed teaching learning plan based on SIERT Social Science text book chapter one „The Hunter-Gatherers“ has been made, followed by classroom teaching. This lesson plan was for seven working days. Selection of the chapter for study is done keeping in mind the scope for creative drama and where the objective of History and Creative drama could be covered. The process flow of the class was on discussion of the topic with the whole class.

Procedure –

Background setting or work to initiate historical imagination and interpretation. For this students observed some sites which was available in school campus and interpret their observation. (What does what we see tell us about what happened here in the last few hours? Or the past few days? What is our evidence for saying so? How reliable is this evidence? Could someone conclude something different from the same evidence? What might possibly make us doubt this evidence? What alternate explanations are there?) Second activity is to create any story which include the historical aspect of the theme. These activities is intended to give an environment and experience to imagine and interpret things as a historian.

Teaching process of content- An open ended story of a girl from hunter gatherer era was shared to initiate the discussion. Pictures, stone tools and other TLM are used hands on by student to experience what the text talk about. These process gave them sufficient platform to imagine and

express their thoughts in discussion. After discussion and interaction another challenge was thrown to the student to explore other ways (in action or play etc.) to express what they have learn. A group of student in one schooldiscussed and came up with the idea of presenting their learnings through drama but the student from another school present their learning through drama which have only action and no voice. After the presentation clarification and discussion was done. This gave them the opportunity to articulate the rational of their presentation and also gave observers to clarify themselves. Analysis of the findings-

- Students have less historical imagination, their expression on history is also poor but never the less they have discreet understanding about history. Creating environment and simple exercise to observe and interpret things in their own ways help them in expression. This exercise enrich discussion in dealing historical topic.
- Creative drama give student the opportunity to change the view that history is of past and boring facts in to activity base, participative and lively topic.
- Creative drama give opportunity to explore expression of learnings beyond writing and speaking. Historical phenomena are better express in actions where emotions, thoughts, understanding become real and alive. Thus this magnify their learning experience and give them opportunity to think deeper on the issue.
- Student could culminate better all the discussions and learnings during preparation and presentation of their learnings via drama. It is also likely possible that their learnings will stay with them more meaningfully rather than memorizing facts.
- Discussion post presentation via drama promote shared learning and group understanding.
- With proper background setting, sufficient discussion and used of TLM, presentation of their learning via action becomes enjoyable, interesting and burden free learning.

### **Discussion (Inferences and Implications)**

The study explored the effect of creative drama in teaching history. The finding indicate that creative drama method of teaching history increase and improved the participation of the students. The whole process of making drama create good understanding and alive

experience for the students. It has increase the imagination, articulation, expressions skills of the students. But the role of the facilitator in this process is very important. The way she instruct, the way she questioned and framing of the questions etc. is very important to convey her intention and connect student with content. Role of using pictures during discussions increase the dimension of their thinking and imagination. It is very helpful when student making drama. Creative drama is also a good way to know that what was student learnt? It is also a way of taking feedback for the teacher that is student got what she wanted to give? Creative drama is really a good way to create historical imaginative environment.

But there is some limitation and challenges in creative drama when it applies in the classroom. Because it is time taking activity and in school there is fix time period for the subjects. It is found that in 40-45 min. difficult to take class with activities. Especially when facilitator introducing a new method of teaching, where students are not familiar with this new approach. Need to work on historical imagination apart from classroom, through book reading on historical stories, historical fiction comics etc. It increases their participation, imagination because they would have something in their mind to make relation with the things and to share.

## **Method 2- Part 1-Archaeology is School and Classroom**

Rational -

Archaeology is the most important part of history and as a source of history. The role of a Archaeologist is need to be address in history teaching it's also the part of the syllabus and it archaeological part of the history create interest for the subject among students. Archaeology is the most practical part of the history. But general notion regarding archaeological activities in school is it is a field based and very technical field and we can't do it in classroom, how we can do such site activity in classroom or in school?

## Methodology -

To experiment the archaeological activities in school and classroom proper teaching session has been taken as part of the Action research in the demonstration school of the Azimpremji School which is based on Government school norms. Number of student is 16 of class VI.

## Procedure-

The process is basically based on main four functions of the Archaeologist: Research (Map and site), Excavation (digging), Find processing (Sorting), Interpretation of the findings and making story. Steps for teaching-

- ☐ Game on What was happened their? To start an observation and logical thinking process
- ☐ Discuss the definition and work of the archaeologist
- ☐ Start with the paper excavation in the classroom
- ☐ Site Design and grid design in the any corner of the school
- ☐ Making the replica of the site excavation on tub or land with the help of sand and mud
- ☐ Using archeological tool kit for digging or artificial excavation to explain archaeologist work
- ☐ Building the pots
- ☐ Now let the student do the hands on experience and interpret the available fact.

## Analysis and Finding

Hands on experience in any teaching are a good method. Teachers can engage students deeply in this method. Replica of the site and pot building was really a good activity which helped to connect the fact during museum visit when student could understand the mark on pots in museum. The interpretation of the facts and articulating that fact with the next logic was the most interesting part they have done. But the big challenge was the time. Doing such activity with limited span of time need to be address and teachers planning for this type of activity should be micro level planning. Even the questions which trigger, facilitate and help the students to think more logical should be the part of preparation. But this is really a good tested method which helps students to understand such a technical topic in classroom in interesting manner.

## **Method 2- Part 2-Field Archaeology or Outdoor Activity**

I have found during my research that teaching doesn't need famous monuments to explain the importance of monuments as a source or to explain the process of enquiry to know about the historical building or monuments. For this part the most nearest temple of the village took as a tool to understand the process of enquiry, research and helping history construction with the help of monument. There is no need that we take the most famous monuments of history teachers can take the nearest available option to explain and to develop the understanding of the role of monuments in history construction and culture.

### **Analysis-**

When we look at the village to village survey report of the Archaeological survey of India, we can see every village in India so rich in history. Most of the village and cities have documented history. History teachers always surrounded by tools of history teaching. So teachers can take any nearest option available. If they don't have any documented option even though they can take any 10-20 year old building to explain the process. It develops different thinking and observation skills in student simultaneously questioning skills of the students.

## **Method 3- Museum and History teaching**

During my PhD research work I frequently visited the museum, where I met a group of students, teachers who come for museum visit as a part of the educational trip. Museum is really a rich source for history and history teaching too. But the first challenge of access of the museum, which is not available for all its limitation of accessibility, said by teachers. Apart from this availability challenge is wherever museums are available even though they are not the part of teaching tool or if they are so they are just a picnic spot. Educational trips to the museums are not educationally rich they are just a show piece of the artifacts and history. Sometimes curators explain about the artifact but just as a fact. Even teachers don't have plan to do list or framework regarding museum visit. If teachers and curators do this activity together and in planned manners then museum can be best education tool for history teaching. Museum need to be make a replica's of the important artifacts so student can touch and experiment and should have museum

educator, which could be the link between curator and teacher. Orientation lecture before going to the museum is the important part of the any educational historical trip.

### **Challenges:**

Talking about the methods only doesn't solve the problem of history teaching. There are challenges to apply these methods and to explore the new methods.

- ⌘ During discussion with the teachers I have found most of the teachers don't have clarity regarding the objective of the history teaching. They took as a conveying facts and information about the Indian history. Students should know about their past and culture. Teachers don't discuss about developing skills as a historian. I feel other than feeding knowledge teacher should develop the skills so students can construct his/her own knowledge. Lack of clarity of the objectives disturbs the framework of the teaching and teaching methods.
- ⌘ Another challenge is text books and their limitation. After new NCERT textbook and Eklavya's books in Madhya Pradesh was a good try to change the traditional textbook but still history text book need more work to do. Textbook can play more important role as guide to teachers. Some of the tools can be mention in text book. So Primary sources can be use in the classroom easily.
- ⌘ Time duration for the classes is other challenge. Teach students with such method demands more time comparison to traditional time distribution of the periods.
- ⌘ Attitude towards the arts subject is other big challenge in India. Teachers don't take arts subject seriously. They don't accept that these subjects also need skill and specialization.

## **Conclusion:**

These were just a three method which I have been experimented, many other methods have done in small scale and others need to be explored. Like comparative study of paintings, making of tool kit for history teaching, module making etc. but this continuous research make me understand that none of the subject is boring teacher can make any subject interesting and through his/her teaching method it can be more productive. Social Science is also a science, it also follow the scientific methodology. In history teaching specific there is need to do more research work not only in methods but also in text book development, need of more details of objective of history teaching in NCF position papers so it can help teachers more specific regarding the objective of history teaching. Last but not the least subject knowledge is not the only factor which affect the teaching but personally I feel the interest and passion for the subject and attitude towards the teaching is other important factors which really affects the subject teaching. Interest and passion for the subject motivate the teachers to explore the different methods of teaching.

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