

INCREASING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOL HISTORY LESSONS AND UTILIZING LOCAL SOURCES ON THE HISTORY OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR: EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH

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Abstract

This article explores strategies for enhancing student engagement in history lessons by incorporating local sources related to World War II. It emphasizes the importance of instilling historical awareness and national identity among students, a task that has become especially relevant in the post-independence period. The study underscores the value of creative teaching approaches that foster historical thinking and written expression, including the use of student projects, local historical narratives, and map-based research. Drawing on practical experiences from Surxondaryo region, the article integrates archival materials and accounts of local war veterans to enrich the teaching content. It also examines the responsibilities of teachers in organizing history lessons using modern pedagogical and information-communication technologies. Overall, the article provides a methodological foundation for renewing history education and developing students' historical consciousness through innovative practices.

Keywords: History education, World War II, student engagement, local history, creative assignments, written projects, map work, historical thinking, student autonomy, Surxondaryo region, war veterans, methodological approach, modern pedagogy, historical awareness.

Introduction

In the context of globalization, one of the most pressing tasks facing the education system is the formation of historical consciousness among young people and their education based on national values. In particular, the use of modern teaching methods in general education schools, along with the integration of local historical sources into history lessons, plays a vital role in increasing student interest and encouraging independent inquiry. Through history education, students not only gain knowledge of past events but also develop patriotism, civic engagement, critical thinking, and independent decision-making skills.

Studying the history of World War II within a local context helps deepen students' historical thinking. Information about individuals from the Surxondaryo region who participated in the war and contributed to victory can effectively engage students in practical research activities. Since independence, significant efforts have been made to restore historical justice, truthfully convey the hardships endured by the nation, and improve the content and methods of teaching history.

This article analyzes ways to increase student engagement in history lessons by incorporating creative assignments and research activities focused on the history of the war, as well as by effectively utilizing local historical sources.



Literature Review

In the work “*We Will Steadily Continue Our Path of National Development and Raise It to a New Level*” by Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, fostering patriotism and respect for historical memory among youth is identified as a priority task in education. This approach calls for renewing the content of history education and increasing attention to the use of local historical materials [1].

Foreign experiences related to enhancing student engagement in history lessons are also of great importance. For example, in L. Borzova’s “*Games in History Lessons*”, it is demonstrated that using game technologies in history classes facilitates easier knowledge acquisition and simultaneously helps develop students’ historical thinking [2].

Documents from the Surxondaryo Regional State Archive (Fond 553, Inventory 1, File 6, etc.) are unique historical sources that include information about life during the war years, selfless labor on the home front, mobilization for the war, and lists of martyrs [3–8]. Using these documents in history lessons not only provides factual knowledge but also revitalizes historical memory among students and strengthens their pride in their homeland.

Regarding pedagogical methodology and technologies, works by J. Yo‘ldoshev and S.A. Usmonov, as well as T. Toshpo‘latov and Ya. G‘afforov (1999), emphasize the importance of effectively applying modern methodological approaches, such as clustering, brainstorming, and problem-based learning. In particular, problem-based tasks based on historical sources encourage students’ independent research [9–10].

Another significant source directly related to the topic is the wartime newspapers “*For Advanced Surxon*” and “*Leninskaya Znamya*”. These publications provide direct information about the selfless labor of Surxondaryo residents during the war and those sent to military service, making them valuable tools for documentary-based history teaching in the classroom [11–12].

Furthermore, the work “*Memory Is Everlasting, Honor Is Eternal*” by S. Tursunov and others offers detailed information about the lives, heroism, and family destinies of Uzbek soldiers who participated in World War II [13]. The first and second volumes of the “*Memory*” series dedicated to Surxondaryo region serve as rich sources for students to understand war events through the examples of local heroes [14].

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that the presented literature and archival documents possess significant scientific and methodological potential for activating classroom learning, teaching war history within the local context, and cultivating students’ historical thinking. Applying these materials in history lessons enriches the content of classes and enhances not only students’ knowledge levels but also their historical consciousness and patriotic feelings.

Research Methodology:

The article is based on generally accepted historical methods, including historicity, comparative-logical analysis, sequencing, and principles of objectivity. The study also investigates the role of traditional handicraft artels in the economic development of local industrial enterprises in the Surxondaryo region.



Analysis and Results

Independence, as a historic blessing, has become an important factor that revives our people's historical traditions and spiritual wealth, enriching them with new meaning. In turn, the education system occupies a unique place within this factor. In the educational process, teaching history with a focus on the national basis, deeply studying and instilling in the hearts of young people the traditions of enlightenment, tolerance, hospitality, as well as virtues such as prudence, faith, compassion, honor, and dignity, has been set as a primary task.

Today, a truthful, objective, and deep study of the history of Surxondaryo and understanding its essence helps students to closely grasp the sources related to the historical traditions of their ancestors and comprehend how they were historically formed. Just as the education system faces growing modern demands for history lessons, the diversity of lesson types, increased attention to historical sources, and the daily necessity of modern pedagogical and information-communication technologies represent the real picture of today's education. Here, the relevance of the statement by our Leader Shavkat Mirziyoyev — “If teaching methodology in schools does not change, neither will the quality, content, nor environment of education” [1] — becomes clear. Therefore, creating a true scientific history of our state and nation has become an extremely important and urgent issue for our broad society. To find an effective solution to this important and pressing issue, it is necessary to include the task of shaping the historical consciousness of the younger generation on the agenda.

In our opinion, first and foremost, it is necessary to create a creative environment within the learning process related to history lessons. To ensure that students deeply understand historical events and scenes, ways to awaken the spirit of creativity in them must be sought. Otherwise, methods resembling rote memorization or vague imagination do not meet the demands of the time at all. Another important factor is organizing students' activities according to a certain order — that is, consistently finding the continuity between topics studied in previous lessons and the content of subsequent ones.

What is meant by awakening the spirit of creativity? Among creative tasks used in history lessons, writing creative works on specific historical topics holds an important place. By assigning creative writing, students simultaneously develop written speech, imagine historical dates, events, personalities, and places, and express these creatively in writing, thereby shaping both creative and historical thinking.

The topics chosen for creative writing should certainly meet certain requirements. For example, the following topics are advisable:

What do you know about heroes who returned wounded from the battlefields of World War II? (Talk about their activities after the war.) When covering such topics, naturally, the student should visit the homes of war veterans living in their district or neighborhood, visit museums, and present information about the heroism they demonstrated during the war. As a result, the student simultaneously recalls, restores, and links knowledge acquired from other historical contexts. Diverse topics for creative writing within history lessons increase students' interest. For example, the post-war occupations or trades of soldiers who returned wounded during the war are of interest to today's general education students, and the teacher's researchfulness in answering these questions is important. During research conducted in regional and district archives, information about the labor activities of those who returned disabled from the war was



studied. In 1971, 49 war-disabled veterans were recorded as visually impaired [5]. Among them were Normurod Togaev and Eshbori Hasanov from Sariosiyo district; Toshtemir Pardaev, Turdi Rakhimov, Hamro Jabborov, Jabbor Normurodov from Sho'rchi district; Hasan Ayupov, Gumar Bikbaev, O. Normurodov, Rajab Boymurodov from Termiz city; K. Choriev, X. Yo'ldoshev, A. Mamatqulov, A. Davlatov from Termiz district; Chori Jalilov, Mamat Nazarov, R. Yo'ldoshev from Sherobod district; A. Mamatqulov, X. Xolmurodov from Boysun district [4]; B. Abdukarimov from Qumqo'rg'on district [5], and others who continued working after returning from the war. For example, Hasanov E. [6], P. Khudoynazarov, D. Davlatov, X. Ishbaev, and I. Valiev were engaged in sewing activities [7]. When covering these topics, the student must imagine the historical period, feel its spirit, and to some extent portray themselves as an official of that era.

According to our President Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, "Today, I would like to specially talk about our war veterans and respected elders who have survived among us and bring blessings to our lives. We must not forget that their lives are precious, and while they are still alive, it is our duty, first and foremost for the government and authorities, to show care and attention to them, ease their burdens, value and honor them" [8].

Among Surxondaryo's soldiers, 3,769 were awarded orders and medals of the country, 6 Surxondaryo natives became Heroes of the Soviet Union, and 3 local heroes of Surxon were full holders of the Order of Glory. Additionally, war-disabled veterans such as Boboqul Xoliyorov, Toshtemir Pardaev, Rajab Boymurodov, Haydar Shaymardonov, Eshbori Hasanov, and Murod Noboev were also awarded many orders and medals [12].

Using maps to stimulate creativity in history lessons also yields good results. Working with maps teaches students to follow the development of certain events through maps, which fosters a sense of carefulness and attention to historical facts in their minds. Below are examples of tasks for organizing creative work using maps:

1. Working with maps of cities that have museums related to the Second World War.
2. Creating a map based on the stories of participants from Surxondaryo in the Second World War. In this task, the student conducts interviews with war veterans or their descendants living in their neighborhood and maps out the cities freed from fascism. In this process, the main role of the teacher is crucial. First, students working independently with maps should be encouraged to illustrate their maps with various pictures, illustrations, and explanations. Secondly, when creating maps, students should be reminded of the requirements for map-making from geography lessons, and these should be explained when necessary. Through such activities, students develop independent thinking and reasoning by effectively using sources as a result of their research and study.

A history teacher must always keep one rule in mind. According to this rule, history primarily teaches every citizen, especially young people, to understand the content and essence of the nation's past, appreciate our rich spiritual and cultural heritage, cherish and protect it as a precious treasure, and ultimately take pride in it wholeheartedly.

Conclusion:

Analysis of historical documents, archival materials, press sources, and modern pedagogical literature in Surxondaryo region shows that teaching events of the Second World War based on



local historical sources is an important tool for developing historical thinking, patriotism, and respect for memory and values among students. The self-sacrifice of the people of Surxondaryo during the war, the difficult labor behind the front, and the mobilization for war serve as a valuable educational lesson for today's youth.

The research results provide practical assistance to history teachers in applying modern pedagogical approaches such as problem-based learning, source-based teaching, and using local history. Enriching the lesson content with real documents, eyewitnesses, and visits to historical sites helps students understand history more deeply and develop respect for the past of their own region.

In summary, studying and teaching history not only from a general national perspective but also at the regional and district levels increases the effectiveness of education and serves to strengthen a lasting memory and national pride in the hearts of young people.

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