Using Simulation Games to Teach History to Students Using Paradigm of Cultural-Historical Psychology

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The article explores strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of training by fostering student engagement and motivating participation. The use of game-based techniques aims to boost students' motivation toward the material being studied. This approach is grounded in the principles of cultural and historical psychology as articulated by L.S. Vygotsky. It offers a theoretical framework for understanding differences not only in intercultural psychology but also in intertemporal psychology, as it enables the examination of psychological phenomena within specific historical, social, and cultural contexts. The article highlights the search for methods to increase motivation and the development of students' subjectivity and positionality. It provides examples of dialogue simulation games used in training, including historical reconstructions, mock trials, cultural immersion, and the Reacting to the Past initiative. Additionally, the article discusses the technologies involved in the preparation and implementation of these activities. This article provides an overview of research focused on the relationship between games and education. It highlights that participation in such games enhances both general and specialized skills and abilities among students, fosters a positive attitude toward learning, and deepens respect for history as a discipline. This approach allows for a theoretical understanding of facts grounded in historical context, helping to overcome the schematism and empiricism often associated with traditional school education. The methodology of simulation games enables students to explore the differences between the present and the past. These games encourage students to recognize and understand the unfamiliar realities of history, as well as the diverse ways of thinking that characterized people from different eras and cultures. The article concludes that well-designed educational games significantly increase the likelihood of achieving desired educational outcomes and contribute to the overall improvement of quality in higher education. The experiences shared regarding the use of role-playing or simulation games illustrate the potential of cultural-historical psychology as a valuable resource in history education.

Keywords: cultural-historical psychology, L.S. Vygotsky, personality-developmental approach, imitation game, historical thinking, motivation, subjectivity, involvement.

Использование имитационных игр в обучении студентов-историков в парадигме культурно-исторической психологии: постановка проблемы

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В статье рассматриваются возможности повышения эффективности обучения с помощью инициации активности учащихся и мотивирования их к участию в обучении. Игровая методика направлена на повышение мотивации учащихся к изучаемому материалу. В основу осмысления материала положены идеи культурно-исторической психологии Л.С. Выготского. Она дает теоретическую основу для объяснения различий не только межкультурных психологических, но и межвременных психологических, поскольку позволяет изучать психологические явления в конкретных исторических, социальных и культурных контекстах. Отмечены поиски способов повышения мотивации, становления субъектности и субъектной позиции у учащихся. Приведены примеры использования диалоговых имитационных игр в обучении: исторические реконструкции, имитационные судебные процессы, культурное погружение, Reacting to the Past. Рассмотрены технологии их подготовки и проведения. Дается обзор работ, посвященных изучению связи между играми и образованием. Отмечается, что участие в подобных играх укрепляет общие и специальные умения и навыки у студентов, положительное отношение к учению, углубляет уважение к истории как науке. При этом создается возможность теоретического отношения к фактам на базе исторической конкретности, преодоления схематизма и эмпиризма в знаниях и мышлении, порожденных школьным образованием. Методика имитационных игр предлагает студентам возможность обдумать различия между настоящим и прошлым. Подобные игры побуждают учащихся распознавать и осмысливать незнакомую реальность прошлого и различные способы мышления людей прошлых эпох и других культур. Делается вывод о том, что хорошо продуманные обучающие игры повышают шансы на достижение намеченных результатов, способствуют повышению качества обучения в высшей школе. Описанный в статье опыт использования разыгрывания или имитационных игр демонстрирует перспективность использования культурно-исторической психологии как важного ресурса в преподавании истории.

Ключевые слова: культурно-историческая психология, Л.С. Выготский, личностно-развивающий подход, имитационная игра, историческое мышление, мотивация, субъектность, вовлеченность.

Introduction

Serious problems in modern education are related to the lack of involvement and motivation of students to actively participate in the learning process. According to Girgin and Ramo [16], modern teaching methods contribute to maintaining the status quo among the young population. Lectures have been used at all levels of education: teachers acted as providers of information, and students as passive recipients. In this regard, teachers try to use new techniques and approaches to provoke students' activity and motivate them to participate in learning.

The main methodological condition for the effectiveness of training is to ensure a personal development approach, which consists of focusing the educational process on students and addressing their cognitive needs directly. Only in this case can students be motivated to successfully master the educational material, capture their attention and maintain unflagging interest. It is possible to ensure a truly high level of students' mental activity, an active actor's position in learning if they are, in a certain sense, creators of the events in which they are included and which they build.

General trends in the development of teaching methods are now gravitating toward game forms as the most effective and humane. The authors of the article have accumulated some experience in using game methods in teaching world history, the history of Asian and African

countries for students of history and regional studies, as well as general history of the state and law for lawyers.

Universities focus on training future specialists. The professions of history teacher, psychologist, international relations expert, lawyer and translator are public, for which social perception skills, the ability to correctly conduct a dialogue, understand and evaluate the personality and actions of others are very important. Active group teaching methods, especially such a form as dialogue simulation games, contribute to this in the best possible way. These may include historical reconstructions, which, like time machines, transfer students to past eras, giving them the opportunity to get acquainted with history first-hand. Students try on the role of historical figures in order to study their lives, actions and motivation. Let's also mention mock trials. Students act as prosecutors, lawyers, prosecution and defense witnesses, jurors and acquire critical thinking and public speaking skills. This may include the role-playing game "Cultural Immersion", during which teams of students compete in the best presentation of the cultural features, customs and traditions of the country they have chosen.

An interesting experiment in active learning focused on students has become widespread in the United States in many cases as part of programs for first-year students. It is called "Role-Playing Games. "Reacting to the Past" or RTTP games. This technology was developed by historian Mark Carnes from Barnard College. Such games have been included in the curricula of teachers of history, political theory, philosophy, psychological sciences, brain sciences, as well as English, French and Italian languages from about sixty colleges and universities across the country. National training seminars are held for them [28]. Feedback from teachers who use this role-playing game in their work is very complimentary. It is considered an effective tool, since it promotes more active involvement of students in the historical context that influenced the emergence of the ideas studied, and increases class attendance [17; 31]. American researchers note that students in various educational institutions become more engaged in class discussions, work more willingly in groups, and demonstrate improved skills in rhetorical presentation, critical thinking, and analysis. They also develop higher levels of empathy and a better understanding of the contingencies of human history [17; 27].

Research Methodology

We were inspired to write this article by the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology. It provides a theoretical basis for explaining not only intercultural psychological differences, but also intertemporal psychological differences, since it helps to study psychological phenomena in specific historical, social and cultural contexts. This concept emphasizes the importance of social interaction and cooperation in promoting learning and development and uses an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the psychological processes of the individual [4]. The ideas of the founder of the theory are actively developed by many scientists [9; 10; 19; 20; 24; 25]. L.S. Vygotsky's ideas also underlie theories of learning that are student-centered. He argues that the learning process will continue more effectively as a result of students' interactions with more knowledgeable peers or adults (e.g. a teacher). Vygotsky described human cognitive development as a "joint process"; this means that people's learning occurs through social interactions. According to his theory, the process of working, learning, and teaching should be carried out by the teacher holistically and implemented through authentic (or genuine) activities. Authentic activities should be based on real-life situations and meaningful to students. Students should also feel the need to study the subject [15]. In psychological science, there are searches for ways to increase motivation, develop subjectivity, and develop a subjective position in students. In this case, a subjective position is understood as an active and conscious attitude to the activities being carried out [5; 6; 7]. Thus, it is noted that in the tradition of cultural-historical psychology, the idea of cooperation between a child and an adult logically follows from the idea of the child's subjective position, thanks to which self-development mechanisms are launched, which contributes not only to the improvement of students' academic performance, but also to their cognitive and personal harmonious development. In the process of educational activity based on the reflexive-activity approach, there is, among other things, an increase in the success of educational activity as a whole and a sharp increase in educational motivation [7]. The problems of the relationship between education, development and health are studied with the support of the conceptual apparatus of the tradition of cultural-historical psychology, including the reflexive-activity approach [32]. The activity approach in our study is presented as the basis for organizing game activities in which students actively participate and learn. The game format encourages its participants to take the position of people from other eras, countries, cultures. It helps to place the cultural understanding of human psychology in specific historical and cultural contexts and think more dynamically and diachronically.

Activity-based learning improves social skills, and in this process the learner is in the position of an active subject and is cognitively and physically involved in the action. He can be the creator of the game, the organizer and the performer. By the way, this is how L.S. Vygotsky defined creativity — "the creation of new forms of behavior" [3, p. 46].

Recently, many researchers consider the so-called gamification as one of the active learning methods in the

educational process. Gamification is usually understood as the integration of game elements and game thinking into activities that are not games. The main idea of gamification is to stimulate motivation, behavioral changes, friendly competition and cooperation in various contexts [14].

When talking about gamification when it is implemented as an educational intervention, Landers [22] offers a set of theories divided into two categories: motivation theories and learning theories. Analyzing theoretical approaches to gamification resources in education, N.A. Astashova and co-authors note that gamification is a unique tool capable of motivating and directing educational activities, taking them to a new qualitative level [1, p. 22].

Game forms can help to learn business communication, because for productive communication it is important not only to be yourself, but also to understand the other person, to put yourself in his place, to enter his position, to learn the art of "being different". Active teaching methods assume the educational process to take place in conditions of group communication, which is especially important in the first year, when a team is being formed.

Researchers note that game activities can be considered as the main tool of personal development, as an experimental path to new ways of thinking and acting [1, p. 41]. When using a game, the role of a passive listener is replaced by the role of an active participant, and thanks to this, students become more relaxed and independent, they develop a positive motivation for learning, cognitive interests and abilities [20, p. 116].

Review of Research on the Use of Game-Based Methods in Education

There are a number of studies devoted to the study of the relationship between games and education. The beneficial contribution of game-based learning in general has been noted by most authors, especially with regard to cognitive outcomes. Cognitive outcomes refer to "knowledge structures that allow games to be perceived as artifacts that provide an opportunity to link knowledge-oriented activities with cognitive outcomes" [28]. Tasks designed as games and simulations are used to develop a wide range of cognitive skills, such as decision-making [23], knowledge acquisition, and content comprehension [1].

Games can be as effective as traditional teaching methods [25; 26]. They are aimed at improving students' concentration, engagement, academic performance, and/or reducing frustration and demotivation [13]. In addition, they are noted to strengthen students' creativity, interpersonal relationships, and cooperation [12]. The influence of gaming technologies on the development of logical thinking, attention, and the ability to work in a team, as well as to analyze any situation from different angles, is noticeable when studying any subject [2, p. 26]. The advantages of using games in education include motivation and competition, problem-based learning, collaborative learning, progress, and immersion [13; 22; 23].

The effectiveness of games is also noted not only in the cognitive, but also in the affective and behavioral aspects [30]. Several reviews have been conducted showing that games provide many opportunities for collaborative learning, increase interactivity and feedback between players, and change their behavior in the desired way. Thus, O.V. Rubtsova showed that role-playing experimentation allows one to transform an educational problem into a task that is personally significant for the student and ensures his emotional involvement in the learning process [8].

Collaboration is considered a basic element of the learning process [1]. At the same time, the role of the teacher is considered as an important factor in expanding the capabilities of groups in the joint creation of knowledge. The role of the instructor is described in the work of P. Lameras et al. [21], who provide conceptual and empirical data on how learning attributes and game technologies should be developed and implemented by teachers, especially with the aim of fully integrating them into lesson plans and the learning process as a whole. Summarizing a brief review of research on the use of game methods in teaching, we will agree with the statement of Christo and Darina Dichev about the need for theoretical and empirical research that can complement each other [15].

Description of experience using active group methods In our practice

We prefer to use the term "dialogue simulation games". Simulation games in classrooms are a synthetic type of educational activity. In its objective meaning, it is psychological preparation for future professional activities, developing students' cognitive abilities and practical skills. The game simulates some real collective activity and through this process, learning occurs.

Let's consider the technology of simulation games in more detail.

In game situations, it is possible to use specially developed positional-role structures, during the "playing out" of which interactions arise that activate the mental activity of the participants. In these conditions, the possibility of role distribution of intellectual responsibilities appears, there is a need to coordinate positions, develop a common solution, which become psychological conditions for developing the ability to correctly conduct a dialogue.

When choosing a topic for a simulation game, it is important to take into account that the situation proposed for playing out should be complex enough to stimulate the cognitive activity of the participants and their intellectual rivalry. Private, utilitarian goals (teaching specific skills and abilities; teaching interpersonal interaction associated with a professional role; updating a large amount of factual material during the game; forming certain ways of thinking, etc.) should be subordinated to more general goals of forming a creative, harmoniously developed personality.

Players must be psychologically prepared to accept roles, each participant must understand their social role and build a system of behavior accordingly. Everyone identifies with a character in the plot and acts in accordance with their ideas about him. This will ensure a sufficient degree of departure of the game participants from their natural life context and immersion in the game. Once the background of the "game" is explained, students need to meet and work outside of class to succeed in achieving their goals in the classroom.

Participation in the game involves various types of human motivation. In this case, the innate desire for competition, recognition and achievement is actualized. These aspects are part of the internal motivation that encourages students to progress and improve their academic performance. This will contribute to increasing the effectiveness of classes, stimulate independent work of students, help to more successfully overcome the internal inertia of the individual, destroy barriers that "freeze" their psychological potential, improve the psychological climate in the group. Players will be able to give free rein to their imagination and try their creative powers within the game situation.

An example of such a simulation game is a game developed for a practical lesson on the topic "The Emergence of Athenian Slave Democracy in the 7th-6th Centuries BC". Students are asked to act out the situation "The People's Assembly in Athens Discusses a Reform on the Elimination of Debt Slavery and the Removal of Debt Stones." All students in the group are divided into subgroups and prepare speeches on behalf of: a) Solon; b) Eupatrides (aristocrats); c) the trading elite; d) owners of craft workshops; d) wealthy peasants; e) the lower classes of the demos.

Everyone prepares a speech and send one or more delegatesfrom each subgroup to tell their position.. Using the literature provided, all participants become familiar with: the situation that preceded the popular assembly; the biography of Solon; the specifics of holding popular assemblies in Athens; the essence of the proposed reform; the characteristics of the social strata of Athenian society, and the political groups within it. Each participant in the meeting must understand the final goal, i.e. what he or she must achieve and what to preserve as a result of discussing the reform project. The game involves making a decision what to do, what to say?

The general goal of the participants in the assembly, speaking on behalf of Solon, the trade and craft circles and the wealthy peasants: to convince the participants in the assembly, using appropriate arguments, of the importance, timeliness and urgent need for the Athenian state of the proposed reform. They must: appeal to patriotic feelings; talk about the disastrousness for the polis of delaying the reform, which could be fraught with a revolutionary explosion; remind about the shameful situation when the citizens of Athens are in slavery to foreigners; worry about the decrease in the number of free citizens; talk about the danger of external invasion.

Representatives of the upper classes of the demos understand all the benefits of this reform for their social class and must actively support Solon. They must thank him for proposing specific measures that implement their interests.

Representatives of the lower classes of the demos must take a dual position. On the one hand, they are grateful to Solon for proposing debt forgiveness, the abolition of debt slavery and the redemption of slave debtors sold to foreign lands. They must tell of their hard lot, of how they are struggling in the clutches of debt, of the bitter farewell to loved ones. On the other hand, they must express the hope that Solon will not stop at the points proposed to the Assembly and will further redistribute the lands, since without this they see no prospects for improving their situation. They can also express fears that Solon, himself an aristocrat, will not go all the way.

The Eupatrides are the main opponents of the reform proposed by Solon, they see in it the danger of reducing their income. Their main goal is to discredit the reformer, recalling all the real and imaginary dark pages of his biography, to intimidate the Athenians with possible tragic consequences.

The participants of the game should take into account that usually only aristocrats spoke at the people's assembly. They were trained in eloquence, the ability to speak beautifully, figuratively, and with arguments. Therefore, speakers on behalf of the Eupatrides and Solon are advised to read the book "Orators of Greece" to familiarize themselves with the features of argumentation, with the typical metaphors that the speakers resorted to. A speech on behalf of an aristocrat should be especially close to the speech of a typical Hellene. The other participants may be less concerned about bringing their speech closer to Athenian realities, since the representatives of the social class on whose behalf they speak had no oratorical experience at all. But mentioning the names of the Greek gods, appealing to their will will still not be superfluous. A mandatory requirement for all participants in the game is that everyone must begin their speech by stating their Hellenic name, and those speaking on behalf of the Eupatrid must also state their father's name. For example: Isocrates, son of Lysias.

During a collective discussion of possible solutions to a problematic task set before a group, a discussion arises. In this case, various, often contradictory, solutions may be presented. Playing out the situation also turns into a lively dispute, a real discussion, a verbal duel of the participants. This lively game of intellects promotes the development of social and communicative skills, teaches a quick reaction to new unexpected arguments, helps to practice analyzing and clarifying concepts, learn to argue and persuade, negotiate, defend one's point of view. It forms in students the ability to play the role of another person, to see themselves from the position of a communication partner, guides them to plan their own speech behavior and the behavior of the interlocutor, develops the ability to control their actions. The experience of conducting the game with several groups of first-year students showed that students, as a rule, master the positions of the parties well and actively defend their position. However, they are less successful in actualizing the real situation of the meeting in Athens in the 6th century BC. For the teacher, the main difficulty of the stage of playing out situations is the low predictability of events that unfold during the group's work.

At the third stage of the lesson, the results are summed up. In the final word, the teacher evaluates the success of the tasks and gives grades. During the analysis of the game, shortcomings in the technique of playing out the situation are discussed, specific errors related to the subject material are identified, and opportunities for more successful actualization of the studied reality are indicated. It is significant that the intellectual activity of most students remained high in several subsequent seminars of the usual type, and the simulation game here acted as an emotional impetus. That is, the changes that occurred in the group during the simulation game were transferred to other conditions of activity.

The game "The National Assembly in Athens..." promotes the development of historical thinking in students, helps to create a "living" picture of the past as a basis for revealing the social process. At the same time, it creates the opportunity for a theoretical approach to facts based on historical concreteness, overcoming the schematism and empiricism in knowledge and thinking generated by school education. The ability to reconstruct a past culture and system of thought and to understand that it differs from current ideas eludes most students throughout their studies. And the methodology of simulation games offers students the opportunity to consider the differences between present and past styles of thinking, since the game forces them to abandon arguments that would be made outside the historical period in which the game takes place. In a standard first-year history course, students do not receive an experience that would force them to solve questions related to what it means to "think historically." And the game being analyzed creates a situation in which its participants encounter these problems, try to develop arguments put forward by people in a completely different time, in a different place and in a different culture, and respond to them.

Another example of a simulation game is a game developed for a practical lesson on the topic of "The Rise of the Athenian Slave Democracy in the 5th Century BC". Students are asked to act out the situation of "Press Conference with Pericles". The task is given: "Let's imagine that with the help of a time machine, the first strategist of Athens in the 5th century BC Pericles came to our institute to meet with students. After reading the necessary literature, prepare questions that would take into account the specifics of the press conference." A micro-group of 3—4 people is selected from the study group, which is preparing to take part in the press conference on behalf of Pericles and his press secretaries.

To illustrate certain arguments, positions and facts, it is advisable to use video clips, photographs, slide shows, diagrams, graphs, charts prepared by Pericles' press secretaries and the participants in the press conference. This makes the game process more exciting and creative for communicators, and more attractive and visual for listeners.

Experience using this method has shown that this form of conducting a lesson causes a great emotional upsurge in students and their high activity. Usually students ask from 60 to 80 questions, and sometimes even 130.

The protocols of the game contain more than 500 different questions about the biography and political activity of Pericles, about the essence of Athenian democracy, about the functions of the People's Assembly, the Council of 500, the elective court, about the features of their activities, about elective positions, about the civil reform carried out by Pericles, about the features of the Athenian economy and culture, about the inheritance of property and others.

In addition to the specified game situations, the author of the article developed and used in the work scenarios of the simulation games "The Trial of Mao Zedong", "The Trial of Heinrich Schliemann", the "Cultural Immersion" technique. The scope of the article does not allow us to describe these games in detail. Let us say a few words about the use of the "Cultural Immersion" technique. Students, divided into subgroups, study the culture, customs and traditions of the country they have chosen. During the lesson, the leaders of the subgroups give a welcoming speech on behalf of a specific historical figure or a collective character (Janissaries, Taipings, Samurai, etc.). Then his fellow students introduce the specific features of the country's culture to the audience in the most entertaining way possible. The script, among other things, includes quizzes dedicated to the history and culture of the country. Such game activities, among other positive aspects, increase the cultural sensitivity of the students.

The use of active group teaching methods, including simulation games, which ensure the development of students' cognitive interests and their active position in learning, helps to increase students' intellectual activity and also contributes to solving the problem of "reviving" history. Simulation games make history as a subject not only descriptive and explanatory, they also help to look at the past centuries through the eyes of the people who created this history. Such games encourage students to recognize and comprehend the unfamiliar reality of the past and the various ways of thinking of people from past eras and other cultures.

Conclusion

Thus, the abundance of literature discussing the use of game methods in teaching indicates the relevance of this problem. However, the scientific field is too vast and requires further study. In general, well-designed educational games increase the chances of achieving the intended results, contribute to the growth of the quality of education in higher education. In general, we can say that the use of game methods creates a complex multifaceted educational environment and contributes to more active involvement of students in learning, since games add variety to educational training modules. The experience of using role-playing or imitation games described in the article demonstrates the prospects of using

cultural-historical psychology as an important resource in teaching history.

Feedback from students who assessed their experience of participating in game situations is a very strong argument in favor of using simulation games. Such feedback was collected when summing up each lesson. They write that it made them think about the very essence of the concept of "democracy", about how to conduct a discussion, choosing arguments that correspond to the era and culture. And in one of the recent conversations with our graduate, who took part in a press conference on behalf of Pericles, he noted that this positive experience is very helpful to him now in his work as a deputy of the city maslikhat of the city of Uralsk. He actively works with voters, often makes deputy inquiries, relying on the opinions of the citizens who elected him. It seems to us that the experience gained allows us to see further prospects for research that can be carried out on the basis of the experience gained. And one of such perspectives lies precisely in the development of historical thinking, by means of immersion in the corresponding epochs of history and culture, creating the possibility of a theoretical attitude to facts based on historical concreteness, overcoming schematism and empiricism in knowledge and thinking. Another perspective is the creation of conditions in the simulation game for the development of the subjective position of students, since inclusion in the game presupposes a conscious and active attitude to the material being studied.

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