



STORYTELLING PEDAGOGY FOR CREATIVITY AND CRITICAL THINKING IN LEVEL VII HISTORY THROUGH STORYTELLING IN TECH-LIMITED SETTINGS

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Abstract

This action research explores the effectiveness of storytelling as a pedagogical strategy to enhance creativity and critical thinking skills among 64 Grade VII students (aged 12–13) in a technology-limited, middle-class school in Pakistan. The study was motivated by persistent challenges in traditional history education, which often relies on rote memorization, leading to student disengagement and a lack of higher-order cognitive development. The investigation employed a quasi-experimental design conducted over a two-week period. The intervention consisted of a pre-test to establish a baseline, two structured storytelling practice sessions, and a post-test. During the sessions, students were guided to create and present their own historical narratives using the “4 Ws” framework (who, what, when, why) to scaffold their analytical reasoning. This methodology was intentionally designed to be a low-cost, replicable model for educators in developing countries with constrained resources.

Quantitative results demonstrated substantial improvement. The average score for story writing increased by 25%, from 57% to 82%. When assessed against a 5-point rubric, creativity scores rose from 2.80 to 4.28, and critical thinking scores improved from 2.77 to 4.13, indicating significant growth in both skill sets. Qualitative data from student narratives provided deeper context, revealing an enhanced ability to connect historical causes and consequences. A notable finding was students' spontaneous use of perspective-taking, often drawing narrative inspiration from the popular historical drama Diriliş Ertuğrul. While the study is limited by its sample size and short duration, the findings strongly suggest that storytelling is a viable, low-tech pedagogy for fostering higher-order thinking in resource-constrained settings. Future research should involve longitudinal studies with larger samples to validate the long-term impact and explore cross-disciplinary applications.

Keywords: Storytelling Pedagogy, Creativity and Critical Thinking Skills, History Education, Developing Countries

Introduction

Creativity is understood as finding new solutions and the skill to produce new ideas (Yulianti et al., 2024). Through critical thinking, learners can then analyse and evaluate information with greater depth and clarity (Vergara & Vergara, 2023), which is crucial in the 21st century as an important skill. According to the Taxonomy by Bloom, in the circle of cognitive activity, this is considered at a higher-level skill. It is required by the learners to question the worth and its reliability as well as to synthesize knowledge. In PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), highlight the importance of measuring students' learning outcomes. This importance highlights critical thinking and creativity as crucial to developing global



competence (Yulianti et al., 2024). However, these skills portray differently across fields. Taking the example of innovation in STEM, experiments are designed through creativity, while in the humanities, learning is shaped by deeper understanding, such as critiquing historical narratives (Alidri, 2022). Therefore, it is vital to focus and address issues in create paths for pedagogical practices that would be more effective as well as preparing adaptable learners.

It has been observed through research that critical thinking and creativity are crucial for student learning. There are four main pillars of creativity, known as curiosity, knowledge, critical thinking, and imagination. It has been highlighted that in the role of nurturing these qualities (Gheraout et al., 2018), innovative learning tools have played a major role. Through a targeted pedagogical approach, critical thinking skills can be strengthened. Digital storytelling supports pedagogical methods such as Flipped-Problem Based abilities in order to assess claims and arguments (Silvita et al., 2024). However, students often find it challenging to select and critically evaluate relevant ideas on their own. Therefore, in this case, the teachers are encouraged to provide such guidance that would enable students to balance originality with practicality as they attempt both to generate and refine ideas (Van Broekhoven, 2023). A systematic evaluation of creativity-based curricula, particularly via importance-performance analysis models, allows educators to assess and improve learning outcomes, thus tackling the ongoing difficulty of quantifying the educational worth of creativity (Chang, 2014).

Teaching history in the 21st century is challenging to students. One of the main reasons is that it depends on passive methods, such as continued reliance on passive learning methods, such as teacher-led lectures and rote memorization, which limit student engagement. Such approaches often fail to capture students' interest, leading to disengagement and a weak connection between historical content and their everyday lives (Aurangzeb et al., 2021; Sebbowa & Ng'ambi, 2020). It is understood by numerous studies that students' learning needs and perspective should be taken into account in order for teaching and learning approaches to be meaningful due to the fact that there is a dire need of rethinking teaching methodologies with the humanities (Booth, 1993).

History can be made more dynamic and relevant for the students with the help of creative methods perceptively experiential projects, digital games and critical thinking exercises. These can help students relate the past to not only their future aspirations but also to their current experiences (Hadjiyanni & Zollinger, 2010). Furthermore, virtual reality offers immersive experiences that allow students to explore historical settings in engaging and interactive ways. Regardless, this technique requires further improvement and refinement before the richness of traditional classroom learning can be fully replicated (Allison, 2008). Moreover, its widespread implementation remains limited, as such technology cannot be easily adopted in all schools, particularly in developing countries.

Teaching history in developing countries encounters a range of interconnected difficulties that greatly influence both the quality and accessibility of education. One of the major hurdles is the minimal incorporation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in classrooms, as these tools remain "at infancy or not used at all" in many developing nations, unlike their demonstrated positive effects in more advanced countries (Adesote & Fatoki, 2013). Economic pressures further weaken the position of history as a discipline, as it is often "routinely dismissed as dispensable" in societies that prioritize immediate economic growth and scientific advancement over historical understanding (Adesina, 2006).

Objective of the study

A key challenge, in context where access to technology is limited, is understanding how the gaps in critical thinking and creativity skills can be approached as a pedagogical intervention to help bridge that gap. This is in context to level VII history students, particularly in developing nations with limited educational resources. This study aims to address in ways storytelling as a pedagogical approach augments creativity and critical thinking abilities among Level VII history learners in technology-limited environments. One primary purpose is to examine the impact of storytelling, both to delineate effective tactics for resource-limited classrooms and to assess its effect on higher-order cognitive capacities, as well as to evaluate its applicability across diverse learning situations. This research is special due to its culturally flexible and cost-effective strategy. This methodology corresponds with the aims of SDG 4 on quality education by fostering fair access



to improved learning outcomes, hence enabling a more in-depth examination of theoretical perspectives and empirical data in the following sections.

Literature Review

Pedagogical Techniques in Education: A Broad Overview

Foundational teaching theories form the basis of effective educational practices. One that would offer valuable insight into improving both instructional methods and learning outcomes. Four personal theories have been outlined by Fox (1983) enabling the teachers to materialize or shape their approach to their work: the 'transfer theory', as the name suggests, the knowledge is transferable; 'the shaping theory', in short transforming or moulding students in accordance with standards that are predetermined.; 'the travelling theory', here the subjects are produced as a journey with the teacher acting as a guide and 'growing theory', which focuses on the personal development of the learner.

These frameworks influence how students engage and perceive learning, but also strategic teaching methods, enabling educators to understand traits such as cognitive, growth motivation and social interactions (Rahmadina et al., 2025; Shah & Tahir, 2025). 'Piaget's theory' of cognitive development and 'Bandura's theory' of social learning through observations are a few influential methods. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs through active knowledge construction within social contexts, whereas Skinner's (1953) behaviourism centres on reinforcement as the primary mechanism for shaping behaviour. Hammerness and Kennedy (2018) highlight the theoretical foundations for creating meaningful connections between educational concepts and classroom practices.

Teachers use a variety of pedagogical techniques to help students understand history, to spark their interest in past events, while building skills in critical thinking and understanding the bigger picture. Students studying history must be able to think critically, relate to historical events, and understand context. These approaches are particularly relevant to this research on using storytelling to enhance creativity and critical thinking skills in Level VII history learning under technological limitations in developing countries. According to traditional Lecture- Based Teaching, A teacher-centred approach where the instructor delivers historical content through lectures, often supplemented with textbooks or notes. But Alidri (2022) notes the prevalence of teacher-centred pedagogies at Gulu University, leading to disinterest in history. Although this method is efficient for delivering foundational knowledge (Bloom's Remembering/Understanding) promoting rote learning but limiting creativity and critical thinking skills, especially in tech-scarce settings.

Another highly effective technique to teach history is Mind mapping where students create diagrams to connect historical events, causes, and effects, promoting logical relationships and comprehension. Le et al. (2021) provide evidence of its success in Vietnamese primary schools, where it boosts creativity and analytical skills using minimal resources like paper and pens. The Analysing and Creating stages of Bloom's Taxonomy in his research support the storytelling pedagogy because they provide a natural link to experiential methods that enhance students' historical comprehension. However, teachers with a proper degree in history and sufficient teacher training are crucial to this achievement.

The integration of problem-based learning with the flipped classroom model allows students to investigate topics independently before class and apply their understanding through collaborative, story-based problem-solving tasks. Silvita et al. (2024) emphasize the efficacy of this technique, especially in assisting students in critically evaluating arguments and events. In circumstances while digital storytelling (using videos, multimedia, or digital tools) has been effective in other contexts, but in a classroom or region with limited technology, this same approach may need to be modified into oral storytelling. This strategy fosters critical thinking using the Evaluating and creating stages of Bloom's Taxonomy and its structured syntax connects to organizational strategies like thematic and chronological approaches, ensuring a cohesive learning progression.

These assist in maintaining a coherent and clear learning flow. The chronological and thematic approach structures history by timeline or by topic, resulting in shaping how students connect and interpret information. The inclusion of the arts in history education fosters border intellectual engagement and creativity. While Thematic and chronological approaches organize history by themes or timelines, influencing how content is processed and understood. Williams (2016) compares these methods, finding that a blended



approach enhances historical thinking skills, supporting Analysing and Understanding. This adaptability to low-tech teaching with storytelling can bridge other interdisciplinary methods, such as STEAM-based learning, which integrates arts into history for creative outcomes.

Effects in Developed Countries

Strong digital infrastructure and technical skills allow educational tools to be easily integrated into school curricula in developed nations like the US, UK, and South Korea. XR simulations let students "experience" major historical events like the Civil War and World War II, fostering empathy and understanding. XR can reveal "hidden histories" and boost analytical involvement when directed by structured education (Hicks et al., 2025). In Europe and North America, augmented and virtual reality improve information retention by 20–30% through visual immersion (Yanti et al., 2025).

Khan Academy and other adaptive learning systems help students acquire Bloom's Taxonomy's higher-order cognitive skills. Internet availability in 93% of U.S. classrooms in 2013 enabled individualised learning and collaborative projects that improved critical thinking scores by 15% (Khan Academy, 2024; Sultana & Sajjad, 2025). Lecture capture and webinars reduce online course dropouts by preserving oral traditions with flexibility (Bates, 2015). While technology can widen gaps for low-income students but good policies such as subsidized internet access, teacher training programs, and government-funded subsidized devices can broaden access, minimize divides and align with SDG 4 on quality education (UN, 2020), setting a benchmark for technological integration.

Effects in Developing Countries

In contrast, low and middle-income countries such as Uganda, Vietnam, and Indonesia face uneven adoption, constrained by limited electricity, internet access (e.g., a 33% gap in least developed nations), and teacher skills, as reported by the World Bank (2019) and UNESCO (2022). Despite these barriers, targeted interventions yield mixed benefits: mobile tech and low-cost tools like apps on shared devices have boosted enrolment, with Alidri (2022) documenting a surge in history students at Gulu University post-COVID through tools like Mentimeter and Voki, shifting from teacher-centred to student-led learning. In Vietnam, mind-mapping apps enhanced primary history comprehension by 25% despite tech limits (Le et al., 2021), while AR pilots in Indonesia improved creativity in STEAM-history integration (Yulianti et al., 2024). Digital divides amplify biases, with rural girls facing 50% less access (Haleem et al., 2022), and teacher professional development (TPD) via tech shows short-term gains but lacks sustainability without peer support (Hennessy et al., 2022; Rashdi et al., 2025).

Adaptations and Comparative Analysis

To address these challenges, adaptations offer hope for success in developing contexts. Hybrid models, such as radio combined with mobile technology in sub-Saharan Africa, bridge gaps by increasing efficiency by 10–20% (UNESCO, 2007), while global aid like US-supported educational television (ETV) initiatives in post-war Korea modernized curricula, though it risked cultural erosion (Kim, 2023). This comparative analysis reveals stark contrasts: developed countries enjoy high access (90–97% connectivity) and strong skill gains (15–30% retention boost) with facilitator-trained teachers (OECD, 2022), whereas developing nations struggle with low access (30–60% in rural areas) and unfamiliar factors widened equity gaps (e.g., gender, urban-rural), undertrained teachers, and low cost-effectiveness unless low-tech hybrids are employed (OECD, 2022; World Bank, 2019).

Implications for History Education

These outcomes possess considerable ramifications for global history teaching. While advanced technologies may democratize access to global narratives, such as employing VR to explore colonial histories, they also pose the potential of fostering "digital colonialism" in developing nations if not sufficiently localized, as Dussel (2022) warns. To address these issues, educators and governments should prioritize low-bandwidth tools, improve teacher training through frameworks such as UNESCO's ICT Competency Framework, and integrate technology with conventional traditions like storytelling to promote diversity and balance. Future studies should investigate the long-term effects of these integrated techniques in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to improve policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. This analysis, informed by global evaluations, highlights the urgent need for ethical and contextually informed technology



utilization to mitigate the growing educational inequity (UNESCO, 2022).

Gaps in the Literature and Implications for This Study

An examination of the current literature on pedagogical methodologies in history education indicates a strong influence of Western, technology-centric research, with advanced instruments like AR and VR being of primary importance. The obstacles faced by emerging countries in education are markedly under examined, particularly for specific skills such as creativity and critical thinking in history education. This disparity reveals a significant research void, as limited studies have explored cost-effective, low-tech solutions such as storytelling intended for resource-constrained educational environments, nor have they methodically assessed their impact on higher-order thinking according to Bloom's Taxonomy. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how storytelling can enhance creativity and critical thinking in Level VII students in developing countries such as Pakistan. This research conducts a structured analysis of student generated narratives, evaluating originality, historical insight, relevance, and narrative technique, with the dual aim of enhancing learners' critical and imaginative engagement with history and providing a vital contextual and methodological perspective to the global educational discourse to help students learn history enjoyably and more easily.

Methodology

Methodology is the process which explores unknown things through evidence, which researchers turn into results and outcomes (Butt et al., 2024; Akhtar et al., 2024).

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental quantitative design with a pre-test, an intervention, and a post-test to see how storytelling helps improve creativity and critical thinking skills in Level VII history students. In this study, we have taken critical thinking as a proxy for evaluation for better understanding needed to analyse history. This intervention is conducted on existing classes instead of random groups, fitting an action research approach to meet practical needs in a setting with limited technology.

Participants

The study included all 64 students (32 from VII-D, 32 from VII-C, aged 12–13) in the 2024 Level VII history curriculum at a school in Pakistan whose name is withheld for privacy, with students from middle-class income background. The school lacks advanced technological tools to teach history, as discussed in the literature. One teacher, who is also conducting the research, led the study, making sure everyone was included to represent the target group. The two-week intervention focused on developing Bloom's higher-order skills (creativity and critical thinking proxy for evaluation) through a consistent storytelling approach, applied uniformly to all students and sessions to maintain accuracy and reliability.

Intervention

The two-week intervention focused on developing Bloom's higher-order skills (creativity and critical thinking proxy for evaluation) through a consistent storytelling approach, applied uniformly to all students and sessions to maintain accuracy and reliability:

- Pre-Test (Day 1): All 64 students received identical photocopied excerpts on the 3rd Crusade (Salah-ud-Din vs. King Richard) and were given the same prompt: "Imagine you have gone back in time during the 3rd Crusade. Write a story of what you will do in this war and evaluate the causes and consequences." No guidance was provided to establish a baseline, with uniform instructions delivered verbally by the researcher.
- Intervention Sessions (Days 3–5): Two guided sessions were conducted simultaneously for both classes by the researcher, using a scripted lesson plan.
 - Session 1 (Day 3): All students received the same Battle of Plassey (1757) excerpt and prompt: "Imagine you are involved in the Battle of Plassey. Identify your character and what part did you play in that war? What was the conclusion of the war?" A standardized whiteboard guide (e.g., character selection, evaluative questions) and photocopied support materials were provided, with identical verbal instructions and 30-minute peer collaboration time.



- Session 2 (Day 5): All students received the Golden Age of Muslims (Abbasids) excerpt and prompt: “Imagine you are a scholar during the Golden Age of Muslims. Identify your character and what part did you play in the progress of the Abbasid Empire.” The same whiteboard guide, evaluative questionnaire, and 30-minute peer support were uniformly applied, ensuring consistent exposure to the technique.
- Post-Test (Day 7): All students received the same War of Independence excerpt and prompt: “Imagine you are in the middle of the War of Independence. Write what happens in the war and also write the conclusion of your own choice.” Identical minimal guidance (whiteboard guidelines, excerpt) and 40-minute writing time were enforced across both classes to maintain consistency. Fidelity was monitored by the researcher, who observed all sessions to ensure adherence to the scripted plan, with deviations (e.g., time overruns) noted and adjusted.

Data Collection

Data were gathered through scored stories (pre/post-tests) and a post-survey. Stories were assessed on a 0–5 rubric across four parameters (creativity, critical thinking proxy for evaluation, relevancy, plot devices; total 20 marks), scored independently by the researcher and co-teacher. The survey (5 Likert-scale questions) gauged self-reported skill changes.

Data Analysis

Quantitative technique is suitable in an empirical research study if researchers intend to test and verify the study hypothesis (Butt & Yazdani, 2023). Therefore, data was analysis applying quantitative approach. Quantitative analysis employed descriptive statistics, wherein pre/post-test scores were tabulated (e.g., Tables 1.a–1.c), and difference scores were computed to order parameter enhancements (e.g., prioritising creativity). Graphs representing trends, and a qualitative explanation that supported the results.

Ethical Considerations

Approval was obtained from school authorities. Parental consent was secured, ensuring voluntary participation, anonymity, and withdrawal options.

Explanation of Improvements

- Consistency across Students: All 64 students received identical materials (e.g., excerpts, prompts), instructions, and time allocations (e.g., 30-minute peer time) across VII-D and VII- C, ensuring uniform exposure.
- Consistency Across Sessions: A scripted lesson plan, standardized whiteboard guides, and evaluative questionnaires were used in all sessions (pre-test, Session 1, Session 2, post-test), with the researcher applying uniformly to all students and sessions to maintain accuracy and reliability.
- Accuracy Assurance: The observation and adjustment for deviations (e.g., time management) ensured the storytelling technique (e.g., guided narrative creation, peer support) was applied as intended, aligning with Bloom’s higher-order skills.
- Clarity: Specific details (e.g., 40-minute post-test time, scripted prompts) enhance replicability and address the need for a robust intervention description in quasi- experimental designs.

4 Results of Analysis (Outcomes of the Storytelling Pedagogy)

Two tests were conducted to assess students’ skills in story writing and based on the results of Pre-Tests, it indicates there are some students whose English writing skills varied from bad to best. In addition, there were also some students who could write basic stories but lacked in expressing their ideas. Thirdly, some students struggled to develop their plots because it required historical relevance, wavering between excessive imagination (e.g., adding dragons or time travel) without regard for historical accuracy and sticking strictly to original facts without any creative input.

The table 1.a shows their accumulative results before any guidance was given to the students.

Table 1.a

Students’ accumulative data of Pre-Test results

Sr. No	Creativity (5)	Critical Thinking (5)	Relevancy (5)	Plot Devices (5)	Total (20)	Percentage Pre-Test
1.	3	3	3	3	12	60%



Sr. No	Creativity (5)	Critical Thinking (5)	Relevancy (5)	Plot Devices (5)	Total (20)	Percentage Pre-Test
2.	3	4	3	3	13	65%
3.	2	3	3	2	10	50%
4.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
5.	4	3	3	4	14	70%
6.	3	2	3	3	11	55%
7.	2	2	3	3	10	50%
8.	3	3	4	3	13	65%
9.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
10.	3	2	3	2	10	50%
11.	4	3	3	3	13	65%
12.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
13.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
14.	2	2	3	3	10	50%
15.	1	1	3	3	8	40%
16.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
17.	3	3	3	2	11	55%
18.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
19.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
20.	5	3	3	3	14	70%
21.	2	3	3	2	10	50%
22.	4	2	3	3	12	60%
23.	3	2	3	2	10	50%
24.	1	2	2	2	7	35%
25.	4	3	4	3	14	70%
26.	4	3	3	3	13	65%
27.	2	3	2	3	10	50%
28.	2	3	3	2	10	50%
29.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
30.	3	2	3	3	11	55%
31.	3	2	3	4	12	60%
32.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
33.	3	3	2	3	11	55%
34.	2	3	4	3	12	60%
35.	3	2	3	2	10	50%
36.	2	3	3	2	10	50%
37.	2	4	3	3	12	60%
38.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
39.	2	2	3	2	9	45%
40.	3	3	2	2	10	50%
41.	3	2	3	3	11	55%
42.	2	3	3	3	11	55%



Sr. No	Creativity (5)	Critical Thinking (5)	Relevancy (5)	Plot Devices (5)	Total (20)	Percentage Pre-Test
43	3	3	3	4	13	65%
44	2	2	2	3	9	45%
45	3	3	3	3	12	60%
46	2	2	3	3	10	50%
47	2	3	3	3	11	55%
48	3	3	3	3	12	60%
49	2	3	3	2	10	50%
50	2	3	3	3	11	55%
51	4	3	2	4	13	65%
52	4	4	3	3	14	70%
53	2	3	3	2	10	50%
54	3	3	4	3	13	65%
55	3	2	3	2	10	50%
56	2	3	3	2	10	50%
57	4	3	3	3	13	65%
58	3	4	3	3	13	65%
59	2	2	3	3	10	50%
60	3	2	3	3	11	55%
61	3	3	3	3	12	60%
62	3	3	3	3	12	60%
63	3	3	3	4	13	65%
64	3	3	3	3	12	60%
Average	2.80	2.77	2.97	2.84	11.38	57%

The table 1.b shows their accumulative results before any guidance was given to the students.

Table 1.b

Students' accumulative data of Pre-Test results

Sr. No.	Creativity (5)	Critical Thinking (5)	Relevancy (5)	Plot Devices (5)	Total (20)	Percentage Pre-Test
1.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
2.	3	4	3	3	13	65%
3.	2	3	3	2	10	50%
4.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
5.	4	3	3	4	14	70%
6.	3	2	3	3	11	55%
7.	2	2	3	3	10	50%
8.	3	3	4	3	13	65%
9.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
10.	3	2	3	2	10	50%
11.	4	3	3	3	13	65%
12.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
13.	3	3	3	3	12	60%



14.	2	2	3	3	10	50%
15.	1	1	3	3	8	40%
16.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
17.	3	3	3	2	11	55%
18.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
19.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
20.	5	3	3	3	14	70%
21.	2	3	3	2	10	50%
22.	4	2	3	3	12	60%
23.	3	2	3	2	10	50%
24.	1	2	2	2	7	35%
25.	4	3	4	3	14	70%
26.	4	3	3	3	13	65%
27.	2	3	2	3	10	50%
28.	2	3	3	2	10	50%
29.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
30.	3	2	3	3	11	55%
31.	3	2	3	4	12	60%
32.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
33.	3	3	2	3	11	55%
34.	2	3	4	3	12	60%
35.	3	2	3	2	10	50%
36.	2	3	3	2	10	50%
37.	2	4	3	3	12	60%
38.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
39.	2	2	3	2	9	45%
40.	3	3	2	2	10	50%
41.	3	2	3	3	11	55%
42.	2	3	3	3	11	55%
43.	3	3	3	4	13	65%
44.	2	2	2	3	9	45%
45.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
46.	2	2	3	3	10	50%
47.	2	3	3	3	11	55%
48.	3	3	3	3	12	60%
49.	2	3	3	2	10	50%
50.	2	3	3	3	11	55%
51.	4	3	2	4	13	65%
52.	4	4	3	3	14	70%
53.	2	3	3	2	10	50%
54.	3	3	4	3	13	65%
55.	3	2	3	2	10	50%
56.	2	3	3	2	10	50%



57	4	3	3	3	13	65%
58	3	4	3	3	13	65%
59	2	2	3	3	10	50%
60	3	2	3	3	11	55%
61	3	3	3	3	12	60%
62	3	3	3	3	12	60%
63	3	3	3	4	13	65%
64	3	3	3	3	12	60%
Average	2.80	2.77	2.97	2.84	11.38	57%

Pre-Test

A Pre-test was conducted as the first stage of the research; this test was to gauge students' ability of storytelling in reference to using a historic event as the main theme of their stories. Students were given a photocopy of the 3rd Crusade about the war between Salah-ud-Din Ayubi and King Richard. Students were instructed to write a creative story on "Imagine you have gone back in time during the 3rd Crusade. Write a story of what will you do in this war and evaluate the causes and consequences".

Students were not provided with any evaluative questionnaire in this session. After the pre-test, students' written work was gauged against the rubric that was established specifically for this research. As it can be seen from the above exhibited table (1.a) the pre-test data, the initial scores ranging from best to worst are as follows: the highest score achiever of 70% were Student 5, Student 20, Student 25 and Student 27; whereas the lowest achiever of 35% was Student 24. Based on the observation data in the pre-tests, which has been exposed through qualitative and quantitative data, it was decided that a practice session was necessary for the students to guide the students on how to inject historic themes with a balance of relevancy, creativity and using the correct plot devices.

Practice Session

Two practice sessions were conducted in two lessons. Students were provided a story prompt in these practice sessions. In the first practice session, students had to write a story on Battle of Plassey of 1757. In the second practice, students had to write a story on the Golden Age of Islam (Abbasid Era). This time, students were guided to write accordingly to the rubrics and the details were shared. For example, what and how to evaluate the stories; how much relevancy is required in the story; what plot devices to use (protagonist, antagonist, side observer etc.) and how much creativity was required. These guidelines were pasted on the board for better visual aids, and hardcopies were also provided to the students. In addition, some extra information was also provided such as the geopolitical climate, land divisions, leaders of that era, war tactics etc. The teacher was always provided on-the-spot guidance.

Table 1.c

Students' accumulative data of Pre-Test results

Sr. No.	Creativity (5)	Critical Thinking (5)	Relevancy (5)	Plot Devices (5)	Total (20)	Percentage Post-Test
1.	4	4	4	4	16	80%
2.	4	5	4	5	18	90%
3.	3	4	4	3	14	70%
4.	5	4	4	4	17	85%
5.	5	5	4	4	18	90%
6.	4	4	5	5	18	90%
7.	4	4	3	4	15	75%
8.	5	4	5	5	19	95%
9.	4	4	5	4	17	85%



Sr. No.	Creativity (5)	Critical Thinking (5)	Relevancy (5)	Plot Devices (5)	Total (20)	Percentage Post-Test
10.	5	5	4	4	18	90%
11.	5	5	4	4	18	90%
12.	5	5	5	4	19	95%
13.	4	5	4	3	16	80%
14.	5	4	4	5	18	90%
15.	4	3	3	4	14	70%
16.	4	4	5	4	17	85%
17.	4	4	3	4	15	75%
18.	4	4	5	4	17	85%
19.	5	4	5	4	18	90%
20.	5	4	4	5	18	90%
21.	4	3	4	4	15	75%
22.	5	4	4	4	17	85%
23.	4	4	3	3	14	70%
24.	2	3	3	3	11	55%
25.	5	5	4	5	19	95%
26.	5	4	4	4	17	85%
27.	4	4	4	3	15	75%
28.	4	4	4	3	15	75%
29.	5	4	4	4	17	85%
30.	5	4	4	4	17	85%
31.	4	4	4	5	17	85%
32.	4	4	4	4	16	80%
33.	3	4	4	4	15	75%
34.	4	5	4	4	17	85%
35.	3	4	4	3	14	70%
36.	5	4	4	4	17	85%
37.	5	4	4	4	17	85%
38.	4	4	4	4	16	80%
39.	3	3	4	4	14	70%
40.	3	4	4	3	14	70%
41.	4	4	4	4	16	80%
42.	5	4	4	4	17	85%
43.	5	4	4	4	17	85%
44.	4	4	4	4	16	80%
45.	4	5	4	3	16	80%
46.	4	4	4	4	16	80%
47.	4	4	4	3	15	75%
48.	5	4	4	4	17	85%
49.	4	4	5	4	17	85%
50.	4	4	4	4	16	80%



Sr. No.	Creativity (5)	Critical Thinking (5)	Relevancy (5)	Plot Devices (5)	Total (20)	Percentage Post-Test
51	5	4	5	4	18	90%
52	5	5	4	4	18	90%
53	4	3	3	4	14	70%
54	5	4	4	4	17	85%
55	4	4	3	3	14	70%
56	3	4	4	3	14	70%
57	5	5	4	5	19	95%
58	5	5	4	4	18	90%
59	4	4	4	3	15	75%
60	4	4	4	3	15	75%
61	5	4	4	4	17	85%
62	4	5	4	4	17	85%
63	5	4	4	5	18	90%
64	4	4	4	4	16	80%
Average	4.28	4.13	4.03	3.92	16.36	82%

Post-Test

Based on the results of the Post-Test (Table 1.b); it can be seen that with proper guidelines and provision of the rubrics indeed improved the result of the test. As students are practiced in writing creative stories but not historical fan fiction or historical dramas because historical stories have some limitations such as politics, culture, arts, language and so on, it is difficult to concoct stories as powerful as Ertugrul or many British Period Dramas. Students were able to explore and test their many theories when writing stories such as “What would have happened if we had won/lost the war, what if I was the villain/hero, what if I was simply an observer and what were my thoughts and feelings during that time?”. Table 2 shows difference in percentage of pre-test and post-test.

Table 2

Difference in Percentage of Pre-Test and Post-Test

Sr. No	Percentage Pre-Test	Percentage Post-Test	Difference
1.	60%	80%	20%
2.	65%	90%	25%
3.	50%	70%	20%
4.	60%	85%	25%
5.	70%	90%	20%
6.	55%	90%	35%
7.	50%	75%	25%
8.	65%	95%	30%
9.	60%	85%	25%
10.	50%	90%	40%
11.	65%	90%	25%
12.	60%	95%	35%
13.	60%	80%	20%
14.	50%	90%	40%



Sr. No	Percentage Pre-Test	Percentage Post-Test	Difference
15.	40%	70%	30%
16.	60%	85%	25%
17.	55%	75%	20%
18.	60%	85%	25%
19.	60%	90%	30%
20.	70%	90%	20%
21.	50%	75%	25%
22.	60%	85%	25%
23.	50%	70%	20%
24.	35%	55%	20%
25.	70%	95%	25%
26.	65%	85%	20%
27.	50%	75%	25%
28.	50%	75%	25%
29.	60%	85%	25%
30.	55%	85%	30%
31.	60%	85%	25%
32.	60%	80%	20%
33.	55%	75%	20%
34.	60%	85%	25%
35.	50%	70%	20%
36.	50%	85%	35%
37.	60%	85%	25%
38.	60%	80%	20%
39.	45%	70%	25%
40.	50%	70%	20%
41.	55%	80%	25%
42.	55%	85%	30%
43.	65%	85%	20%
44.	45%	80%	35%
45.	60%	80%	20%
46.	50%	80%	30%
47.	55%	75%	20%
48.	60%	85%	25%
49.	50%	85%	35%
50.	55%	80%	25%
51.	65%	90%	25%
52.	70%	90%	20%
53.	50%	70%	20%
54.	65%	85%	20%
55.	50%	70%	20%
56.	50%	70%	20%



Sr. No	Percentage Pre-Test	Percentage Post-Test	Difference
57	65%	95%	30%
58	65%	90%	25%
59	50%	75%	25%
60	55%	75%	20%
61	60%	85%	25%
62	60%	85%	25%
63	65%	90%	25%
64	60%	80%	20%
Average	57%	82%	25%

Based on the results of the students exhibited above (table 2) , it shows how much students' historical story writing improved from pre-tests to post-tests. After calculating the differences between the pre-tests and post-tests percentages, the improvements ranged from 20% to 40%. In pre-tests, the average percentage of the results was 57%; in post-tests, the average percentage results increased to 82%, showing an improvement of an average of 25%.

Table 3
Pre-Test and Post-Test

Rubrics	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Creativity (5)	2.80	4.28
Critical Thinking (5)	2.77	4.13
Relevancy (5)	2.97	4.03
Plot Devices (5)	2.84	3.92
Total (20)	11.38	16.36

The table 3 exhibited above shows the pre-test and post-test results for students in four key rubrics: Creativity, Critical Thinking, Relevancy, and Plot Devices. On average, students initially scored 2.80/5 in creativity during the pre-test, indicating that their ideas were somewhat limited in originality. However, after the test, their creativity score increased to 4.28/5, reflecting a significant improvement in their ability to generate unique and imaginative ideas. In Critical Thinking, students started with an average score of 2.77/5, showing that their ability to critically assess their work was basic. Post-test, this score improved to 4.13/5, demonstrating that students were more effective in evaluating their own and other classmates work. In terms of relevancy, students scored an average of 2.97/5 in the pre-test, meaning they had a moderate grasp of aligning their content with the task at hand. After the test, their score rose to 4.03/5, highlighting their enhanced ability to stay focused on the task's requirements.

Finally, in plot devices, the pre-test average was 2.84/5, suggesting that while students understood the use of plot devices, their application was relatively basic. After the intervention, their score increased to 3.92/5, indicating a stronger and more sophisticated use of plot devices in their narratives. The results of this study are supported by Isbell et al. (2004), who demonstrated that storytelling enhances story comprehension and oral language complexity in young children, aligning with the 25% improvement in narrative skills observed here (Masih et al., 2025).

Their finding that storytelling fosters engagement and synthesis mirrors the significant creativity gains (from 2.80 to 4.28) and critical thinking development in our Level VII students. Additionally, the interactive nature of storytelling in their research supports the effectiveness of our guided sessions in balancing historical relevance with imaginative expression. Overall, the comparison between pre-test and post-test results demonstrates substantial improvement across all areas, indicating that the students benefited from focused learning, leading to notable progress in their creativity, critical thinking, relevance, and use of plot devices.



However the highlight of the result is increase in creativity, which fulfils the purpose of this research, to inject creativity in story telling using history as the central theme of their writing process.

Discussion

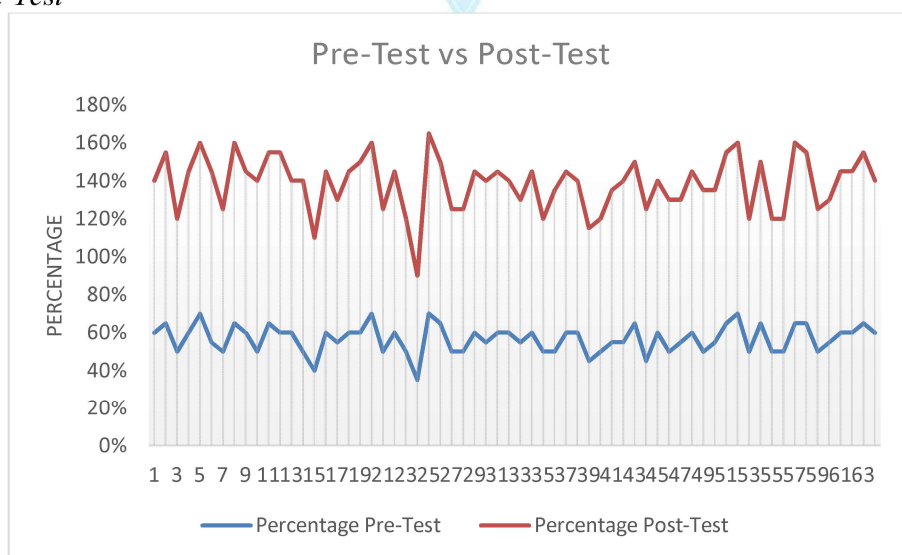
Throughout the course of this research, many observations were made regarding the learning process of the students. Some factors need to be considered to make this research more reliable and easier to conduct in the classrooms. As this research examines the limitations of teaching history in a resource-limited classroom environment while achieving the best results, storytelling was used as an apparatus to improve the creativity and critical thinking of historical facts. Classroom's whiteboard and photocopies were used as these resources are widely available and can be reused. During this research process, opportunities were provided to students where they could "examine" history from different perspectives. Extra historical information is necessarily required for this research, as students cannot write historical storytelling without it. Otherwise, the purpose of this research would not be achieved.

The results of this study are supported by Astuti (2017), who found that storytelling significantly improved speaking skills in narrative text among eleventh-grade students, with 80% responding positively to the technique. Similarly, our research demonstrates enhancements in creativity and critical thinking through storytelling in history, indicating its versatility across subjects. Astuti's use of quasi-experimental design aligns with ours, reinforcing the reliability of storytelling for fostering higher-order skills.

Similarly, the research of Koster (2012) focused on aspects of Break, Bridge, chord, lyrics, and melodies, so as to develop the creation of songs that sound melodious. The main purpose of the research is to make the learning process a fun and creative process, where the students can gain experience and develop their own learning methods. Barzaq (2009) emphasizes integrating stories into the curriculum to build sequential thinking, helping students organize events logically and connect ideas in a coherent narrative. Furthermore, the emphasis on reflective narrative evaluation in Barzaq (2009) validates our participants' enhanced ability to balance historical accuracy with imaginative input, promoting critical thinking in history education.

Figure 1

Pre-Test vs Post-Test



Based on the quantitative analysis on the pre-test and post-test, the students who showed the most remarkable improvements were Student 10 and Student 14; their pre-test scores were 50%; however, after the post-test, they scored 90%, meaning they showed an improvement of 40%. The percentage gain of each student varies, but still shows a minimum improvement of 20% to 35%. This may be affected by intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as hereditary factors, typical interests and individualistic factors, the environment, maturity level, and freedom of expression.



Conclusion

After conducting a pre-test, a post-test, and 2 practice sessions, it can be concluded that when students are allowed to create their own stories within the parameters of that historical event, students' creativity and critical thinking skills improved significantly. The intervention resulted in a 25% average improvement in story writing scores (from 57% to 82%), with creativity scores rising from 2.80 to 4.28 out of 5, underscoring its effectiveness. In the pre-test session, students were confused about how to weave their own story and what elements were required for the story to remain relevant. However, after the practice sessions, students showed immense creativity and even evaluated the aftermath of historical events on the common man. In conclusion, creating stories was a critical thinking activity because in this activity they were actually mirroring their favourite TV Drama *Diriliş Ertuğrul* and it gave the students the imagination to be in "somebody's shoes" and view the historical world from their character's perspective.

These findings align with Isbell et al. (2004) and Barzaq (2009), who noted storytelling's role in enhancing narrative and critical thinking skills, particularly in resource-constrained environments. Based on the pre-test results, some students showed initial deficiencies in creative writing, vocabulary, grammar, and sentence construction. The tech-limited setting and middle-class background shaped students' reliance on storytelling, highlighting its adaptability.

Hence, the following recommendations are made if this activity is conducted in the classroom: (1) Teachers are recommended to prepare resource materials and have a thorough understanding of the topic, including culture, social circles, laws, policies, and maps, to support story development. (2) Pictures can be used as prompts instead of questions to help students visualize their stories. (3) This activity should follow PPIR, with students preparing rough drafts beforehand; some needed extra time, so teachers should assign it as homework, classwork, peer work, or group work within 30–40 minutes. (4) Extending this as role play could further enhance critical thinking and speaking skills. This approach could reform curriculum development in Pakistan, promoting low-tech, inclusive pedagogy

Limitations of this study

The present study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The small sample size of 64 students from two classes at a single tech-limited, middle-class school in Pakistan, the small sample size limits generalizability and statistical power. The two-week duration (pre-test, two practice sessions, post-test) offers limited insight into long-term skill retention, such as creativity rising from 2.80 to 4.28 out of 5. Subjective rubric-based assessments by the researcher-teacher, lacking inter-rater reliability, may introduce bias. The focus on Level VII history students restricts applicability to other contexts, while the absence of inferential statistics and systematic qualitative analysis weakens conclusions. Future research should explore larger samples, controls, and extended durations. Finally, the findings are context-specific, reflecting the educational and cultural setting of a single Pakistani school, and therefore may not be directly generalizable to other regions or educational levels.

Future Research Directions

Further studies ought to enhance the results of this study by broadening its scope and methodology. Subsequent studies could include larger and more diverse samples across different schools and grade levels to enhance generalizability. Incorporating a control group and extending the duration of the intervention would allow for stronger causal inferences and insights into the long-term impact of storytelling on creativity and critical thinking. Researchers are also encouraged to explore the integration of digital storytelling tools where technology access permits, to compare outcomes between traditional oral storytelling and digital formats. Additionally, future studies could employ mixed-method or longitudinal designs to capture both the quantitative improvements in learning outcomes and the qualitative experiences of students and teachers. Exploring teacher training models for implementing storytelling pedagogy and examining its effects on other humanities subjects could further contribute to developing innovative, inclusive, and context-sensitive teaching approaches.

Contributions of the Authors

Each author made a substantial contribution to the work reported and took part in the ideation, development, and final approval of the manuscript.



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Every participant in the study gave their informed consent.

Statement of Data Availability

The corresponding author can provide the data used in this study upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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