



Learning Approaches That Enhance Critical And Creative Thinking In Role-Playing Models

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Abstract

Background: Traditional teacher-centered learning methods in economics education, such as lectures and one-way knowledge transfer, have proven ineffective in developing students' critical and creative thinking skills. These conventional approaches fail to engage students in active problem-solving, particularly in practical areas like financial literacy, resource management, and responsible consumption. Given the growing demand for innovative and analytical thinkers in today's economy, there is a pressing need for pedagogical strategies that foster independent thought and decision-making.

Objective: This study investigates the impact of the role-playing method on enhancing critical thinking skills among 6th-grade students in social studies, specifically focusing on economic concepts.

Method: A quasi-experimental research design was adopted, with participants divided into control and experimental groups. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests measuring critical thinking abilities, supplemented by student questionnaires and classroom observations. Statistical analysis was performed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test in SPSS 17 to evaluate the significance of the findings.

Results: The experimental group, which engaged in role-playing activities, demonstrated a marked improvement in critical thinking compared to the control group. Students exhibited enhanced problem-solving skills, better analytical reasoning, and increased participation in discussions. The interactive nature of role-playing created a more stimulating learning environment, boosting motivation and collaborative learning.

Conclusion: The study confirms that the role-playing method significantly enhances students' critical thinking abilities by encouraging active participation, perspective-taking, and real-world application of knowledge. These findings highlight the method's potential as an effective alternative to traditional lecture-based instruction.

Implication: Educators should consider integrating role-playing into social studies curricula to promote deeper cognitive engagement. Further research could explore its long-term effects across different subjects and educational levels.

Keywords: Critical thinking, role-playing method, active learning, social studies education, student engagement



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INTRODUCTION

National education serves as a reference for educational goals in every implementation across each pathway, level, and type of education, and can simultaneously foster both extrinsic and intrinsic knowledge. Efforts to fulfill the functions and objectives of national education are pursued through three educational pathways: formal, non-formal, and informal.

Meanwhile, the current state of education still has some using the teacher-centered learning approach. The teacher acts as the provider of as much information as possible to the students (instructor) and is accompanied by lecture methods, question-and-answer methods, and assignment giving. Thus, the learning process is less able to make students active in the teaching and learning process and less able to make students critical and discerning in making decisions. This tendency in learning results in weak self-development in students, leading to suboptimal learning outcomes.

Similarly, in elementary schools, the learning methods frequently used by social studies teachers include the expository method, lecture method, question-and-answer method, and assignment method. According to Sanjaya, as quoted by Jumanta Hamdayama, the expository learning method is a learning approach that emphasises the process of delivering material verbally from a teacher to a group of students to prevent students from becoming bored while learning.¹

According to Ahmadi and Joko Tri Prasetyo, as quoted by Ratna Wilis Dahar, the expository learning method can be defined as the general patterns of activities of teachers and students in the realization of learning activities to create comfort in learning and achieve the outlined goals.² That statement is not much different from Muhibbin Syah's expression, which states that the expository learning method is defined as a number of steps engineered in such a way as to achieve specific teaching objectives.³ The expository learning method is one of the teaching methods that helps students learn basic skills and acquire information that can be taught step by step so that students do not feel bored while studying. This expository learning method is specifically designed to support students'

¹ Jumanta Hamdayama, *Metodologi Pengajaran*, Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2011, h. 141

² Ratna Wilis Dahar, *Teori-teori Belajar dan Pembelajaran*, Jakarta: Erlangga, h. 94

³ Muhibbin Syah, *Psikologi Belajar*, Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2011. h.73

learning process related to well-structured procedural knowledge and declarative knowledge, which can be taught gradually, step by step.⁴

The lecture method is a form of presenting teaching materials through explanation and oral narration by the teacher to students about a specific topic. In their lectures, teachers can use aids such as pictures, maps, objects, replicas, and others. The role of students in the lecture method is to listen attentively and take notes on the key points presented by the teacher.⁵

According to Abuddin Nata, "the lecture method is a way of presenting lessons conducted by the teacher with narration or explanation directly in front of the students."⁶ Meanwhile, according to Sholeh Hamid in his book *Edutainment*, he states that "the lecture method is a method that has indeed existed since the advent of education."⁷

The question-and-answer method is a teaching method that allows for direct two-way communication because at the same time there is a dialogue between the teacher and the students, the teacher asks questions and the students answer, or the students ask questions and the teacher answers. In this communication, a direct reciprocal relationship between the teacher and the students is evident (Ibrahim, 1996: 106 in Fathony, 2019: 90).

Syaiful Bahri Djamarah and Aswan Zain (1995, p. 96) state that "the task method is a way of presenting material where the teacher assigns specific tasks to facilitate learning activities." The tasks assigned to students can be carried out in the classroom, schoolyard, library, workshop, laboratory, at the students' homes, or anywhere as long as the tasks can be completed.

According to Sagala (2005, p. 219), the assignment method is: A way of presenting learning materials where the teacher assigns specific tasks for students to engage in learning activities, which must then be accounted for. The tasks assigned by the teacher can deepen the lesson material and also check the material that has been learned. Assignments encourage children to actively learn both individually and in groups.

Such learning is perceived as less effective in engaging students; they merely become passive listeners. Conventional learning is essentially controlled by the teacher. The teacher defines the concept and provides examples and non-examples of it. Ultimately, the teacher asks the students to demonstrate their understanding of the concept.

⁴ Ibid., h.90

⁵ Mu'awanah, *Strategi Pembelajaran Cet 1* (Kediri: Stain Kediri Press, 2011), 27.

⁶ Abuddin Nata, *Prespektif Islam Tentang Strategi Pembelajaran* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2011), 181.

⁷ Sholeh Hamid, *Metode Edutainment* (Jogjakarta: Diva Press, 2011), 209.

There are various methods commonly used by teachers in the learning process. The selection, determination, and use of these methods must be adjusted to the goals, materials, student conditions, situations, and the teacher's own abilities. There are several methods (1). Lecture method, (2) Question and answer method, (3) Discussion method, (4) Assignment/recitation method, (5) Demonstration and experiment method, (6) Group study method, (7) Socio-drama method, (8) Role playing method, (9) Field trip method, (10) Drill method, and (11) Team system method. Of the eleven teaching methods mentioned above, the researcher chose the role-playing method. The researcher chose the role-playing method to determine whether it enables students to think critically when finding solutions to problems around them. The economics education developed by high school teachers so far has not fostered students' ability to think critically. The teaching methods used are conventional, as previously explained. In this case, the role-playing method is expected to make economics learning more challenging, thereby developing students' critical thinking skills and enhancing their potential.

The role-playing method is designed to facilitate problem-solving through critical thinking by simulating roles that involve human relationships, particularly those related to the lives of students.

METHOD

What is the role-playing method? Sandra de Young in Nursalam and Efendi (2008) states that the role-playing method, also known as role-playing, is a form of drama. In this method, students are asked to play a drama, spontaneously demonstrating their roles in interactions. The roles performed are related to problems or challenges and their relationship with humans. Role playing or role-playing. It is one of the teaching methods that teachers can apply to students. This article will provide an explanation of the learning method using this technique.

The question is, what is meant by the role-playing learning method? And the results of the author's research will be explained in this article. Additionally, this article will describe many more things. Hopefully, the discussion of the learning method using role-playing techniques will help readers understand the process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Role Playing Method

The role-playing method is one of the methods widely used in social studies learning. This strategy asks anyone involved to consider themselves as someone else, with the aim of understanding how others act and feel. Or playing a game that gives the opportunity for the students involved to become someone else and not themselves, and in the process, they will gain an understanding of others.

According to Richard (2007:5), “role playing is an effective learning strategy where students act as other characters, thereby gaining recognition from others who see the value of understanding the complexities of solving problems and issues in the world.” In the context of social studies, this strategy can be used to learn about past issues and decisions, as well as current issues in the local community. Steps in using the Role Playing method that need to be considered are as follows:

- a. Preparation
 - 1) Preparation for role-playing
 - (a) Choosing problems that contain different viewpoints and possible solutions.
 - (b) Guiding students towards situations and problems they will face.
 - 2) Choosing players
 - (a) Choose voluntarily, do not be forced.
 - (b) As much as possible, choose players who can recognise the roles they will be playing.
 - (c) Avoid players who are self-appointed by the students.
 - (d) Choose several players so that one person does not play two roles at once.
 - (e) Each group of players consists of a maximum of five people.
 - (f) Avoid having students play roles that are close to real life.
 - 3) Preparing the audience
 - (a) Must ensure that the audience understands the situation and the purpose of the role play.
 - (b) Guide them on how they should behave.
 - 4) Preparation of the players
 - (a) Let the students prepare it with minimal teacher intervention.
 - (b) Before playing, each player must fully understand what they are doing.

- (c) Players must be fluent and preferably have an opening phrase, but avoid retraining once they are ready to play.
 - (d) Prepare the place well.
 - (e) Sometimes "small group role-playing" is a good way to role-play.
- b. Implementation
- 1) Try to keep it brief, five minutes is enough for beginners, and play until it's finished, without interruptions.
 - 2) Let spontaneity be the key.
 - 3) Don't judge their acting, language, and so on.
 - 4) Let the students play freely without grades and levels.
 - 5) If a blockage occurs, things that can be done include:
 - (a) Guided with questions.
 - (b) Looking for someone else for that role.
 - (c) Stop and proceed to follow-up.
 - 6) If the player gets lost, do:
 - (a) Reformulate the situation and the problem.
 - (b) Summarize what has been done.
 - (c) Stop and redirect.
 - (d) Resume after a brief explanation.
 - 7) If a student is disruptive:
 - (a) Assign them a special role.
 - (b) Don't pay attention to him.
 - 8) Don't let the audience disturb, if they don't like the way their friend is acting, give them a chance to act it out.
- c. Follow-up
- 1) Discussion
 - (a) Proper follow-up discussions have a significant impact on students' attitudes and knowledge.
 - (b) Discussion can also analyze, interpret, provide solutions, or recreate.
 - (c) In the discussion, it is advisable to evaluate what has been learned.
 - 2) Conducting role-playing again, sometimes replaying can provide a better understanding (Leonard H. Clark, 1973 in Wahab, 2008:111-114)
 - 3) Critical Thinking

Fisher (2009: 4) states that, “Critical thinking is reasonable and reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. Critical thinking is a mode of thinking about any issue, substance, or problem in which the thinker improves the quality of their thinking by skillfully handling the structures inherent in thinking and applying intellectual standards to it,” (Fisher, 2009: 4). So, critical thinking demands a hard effort to examine every belief or assumptive knowledge based on its supporting evidence and the subsequent conclusions it leads to. Here are the steps as an effort to develop critical thinking skills:

(a) Recognizing the problem.

Identifying the problem is the first step to demonstrating critical thinking. Never respond to something if you do not understand what the main issue is. A critical thinker must identify the issue first before drawing a conclusion.

(b) Finding the methods used to address the problem. After successfully identifying the problem, the next step is to find ways to solve it. Broader knowledge and creative efforts to seek it out are important to support critical thinking.

(c) Collecting and organising the necessary information for problem-solving. Sufficient information can enable us to assess something accurately and precisely.

(d) Recognising unstated assumptions and values. This means that a critical thinker needs to understand the intentions or ideas behind something that is not explicitly stated by others. Here, sharp analysis is needed.

(e) Use precise, clear, and distinctive language when discussing an issue.

(f) Evaluating data and assessing facts and statements.

(g) Observing the logical relationship between the issues and the provided answers.

(h) Drawing conclusions or opinions about the issues or problems being discussed.

Important aspects that are highly emphasised in critical thinking and are related to the thoughts of Edward Glaser and Richard W. Paul in Sihotang et al. (2010:

8) that "Critical thinking requires the fulfilment of several basic abilities, among others":

- (a) The ability to determine and take the right position when discussing or questioning an issue. It means we must determine the right position regarding the issue at hand. Don't let yourself waver in determining your position.
- (b) The thoughts we provide must be relevant to the topic being discussed.
- (c) The arguments we present must be rational.
- (d) With clear reasons, we must decide to accept or reject a decision or claim made by someone else.
- (e) The decision must come from within oneself, not influenced by external factors.

CONCLUSION

Role-playing is a learning method that involves students being active and playing an important role in the learning process. The use of the role-playing learning method can make the learning atmosphere more enjoyable, thereby motivating students and making them enthusiastic during the lessons. Every method certainly has its strengths and weaknesses, including the role-playing learning method. Therefore, a teacher or educator needs to combine this role-playing learning method with other methods according to the material or competency standards that the students aim to achieve. Thus, in addition to students being motivated to learn, the learning process will proceed as expected, and the teacher will also benefit from the outcomes of the learning that are indeed appropriate. Based on the results of the data analysis, it can also be concluded that the use of the role-playing method has a positive impact on students' critical thinking skills.

IMPLICATION

The role-playing method can be applied as one of the methods in social studies learning.

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