

WAYS OF TEACHING OF HISTORY IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract: Effective history instruction continues to be a significant concern for many history educators. This issue arises primarily because numerous history teachers fail to implement suitable teaching methods. Consequently, students often perceive history as a dull and repetitive subject. A common criticism of history education is that it tends to focus on recounting past events and frequently mentioning dates, which can render the lessons dry and unengaging. Traditionally, history was taught through oral narration, which positioned students as passive recipients of information. However, with the shift towards student-centered learning, contemporary teaching approaches can incorporate innovative tools and techniques to enhance the effectiveness of history instruction. This shift aims to foster greater student interest in the subject, making the teaching and learning of history a more enjoyable experience. History encompasses various dimensions, including arts, science, technology, economics, and social issues, with the foundations of every discipline rooted in historical context. These elements collectively establish history as a distinct field of study, often referred to as the queen or mother of social sciences. This article outlines a vision for enhancing history education in higher education and discusses the identification of optimal classroom strategies for effective teaching and learning.

Keywords: History, Higher education, Teaching methods, Education, Higher education, Sources

1.0 Introduction:

History involves the examination and interpretation of human experiences, allowing us to explore the continuities and transformations that occur over time. Prior to the 19th century, history was primarily associated with literature and tales of heroism. These narratives often contained exaggerated and fictional elements, leading some to perceive history as merely a collection of fanciful tales and inaccuracies. In the absence of scientific thought, history was viewed as a form of storytelling. The focus of early historical accounts was predominantly on monarchs, warriors, and nobility, neglecting the experiences of ordinary individuals. An anecdote illustrates this: when Sir Robert Walpole, the Prime Minister of England, fell ill, his wife offered him a history book, to which he famously exclaimed, "Yes, anything but history." Similarly, Napoleon was known for recounting history through largely fictional narratives. The 19th century marked a significant shift with the advent of scientific advancements, which revolutionized education. Consequently, history began to be recognized as a continuous narrative reflecting the gradual evolution of human existence. This shift altered public perceptions of history. According to Fried, history has been a source of truth for centuries, while Jones views it as a repository of life experiences, valuable for contemporary youth seeking to learn from humanity's past. Herbert emphasized the importance of history as a core subject, developing a curriculum around it. History embodies both scientific inquiry and artistic expression; it is "science" when it uncovers truths and transforms into "art" when it presents and narrates those truths. History is currently regarded as a significant subject in educational institutions, including schools, colleges, and universities.

2.0 Objectives of the study:

1. This study aims to gather insights into the different teaching methods employed for history instruction at the higher education level.
2. What instructional strategies can enhance the teaching of history in higher education?

3.0 Methodology:

The research is grounded in secondary data sources. Relevant information for the research paper has been obtained from a variety of books, newspapers, articles, research journals, and online resources.

4.0 The Importance of Teaching History:

A society devoid of awareness regarding its historical background, origins, and cultural heritage resembles a tree lacking roots - Marcus Garvey. For any nation, history serves as a repository of memories that shape its identity. The term "history" encompasses not only past events but also the circumstances and processes that have influenced those events. By studying history, students develop the capacity to comprehend the present through

the lens of the past and to evaluate their future prospects. It provides insights into both national and global cultures. The primary aim of history education is to foster social understanding among students and to cultivate effective citizenship in future generations. History educators must possess a clear understanding of the objectives that history aims to achieve within their cultural and societal context. Teaching history should transform students' perceptions, encouraging them to engage with significant historical inquiries. This discipline enables students to recognize their cultural roots, identity, and heritage while also fostering an appreciation for the cultures and perspectives of others. History promotes cultural pluralism and encourages tolerance towards diverse ethnic groups. A solid grasp of history equips students with fresh perspectives on their past and potential future paths. Ultimately, history education nurtures a genuine sense of patriotism and a deeper understanding of national heritage.

5.0 An Effective Approaches of Teaching History:

An effective approach to teaching history is essential for engaging students. As noted by the Secondary Education Commission, "Even the best curriculum and the most perfect syllabus remains dead unless quickened into Life by the right methods of teaching and the right kind of teachers." Many students perceive history as dull and disconnected from their lives. However, history educators have the opportunity to make the subject captivating by linking it to contemporary issues. There are numerous strategies that can enhance the vibrancy of history lessons. Techniques such as active learning, the use of films, library research, exploration of special topics, and storytelling can significantly improve the teaching of history. Incorporating primary sources into lessons allows students to engage directly with historical materials. Additionally, addressing local issues can help students relate more personally to historical events. Teachers can also share effective strategies they have developed throughout their careers. While there is no universal method for successful teaching, the selection of appropriate techniques is influenced by various factors, including the students, the subject matter, available resources, and the teacher's own philosophy. Teaching methods should be tailored to meet the specific needs of learners and the context in which they are learning. Consequently, similar teaching methods may not be applicable in all situations or for all time periods. A diverse array of teaching methods can be employed to address different objectives in history education, ultimately helping to combat student disinterest and foster a greater appreciation for the subject. We will now explore the various methods that can be utilized in history instruction.

6.0 Lecture and Discussion Method:

The lecture method is a traditional approach to teaching history, recognized for its convenience and cost-effectiveness across various subjects. This method is particularly valuable for students as it allows for the efficient delivery of extensive information to a large audience, enabling numerous topics to be addressed within a single class session. However, it often limits student engagement, as they primarily assume the role of passive listeners. Despite this limitation, the lecture method remains integral to history education, leading to the development of the discussion method. The discussion method enhances the lecture approach by fostering both listening and active participation among students. By integrating discussion into lectures, educators can create a more dynamic learning environment. This method encourages students to engage in topic selection, idea presentation, and collaborative analysis, thereby facilitating informed decision-making supported by relevant materials. In this format, the exchange of ideas is more balanced between students and teachers. History educators can tailor their language and presentation style to suit the students' needs, promoting a more interactive dialogue. Effective implementation of this method requires careful planning, including the selection of appropriate subjects and ensuring the teacher is well-versed in the material. It is essential to communicate the discussion points to students in advance, which can be facilitated by writing topics and questions on the blackboard. Both teachers and students should be ready to actively participate in discussions, which involve a free exchange of ideas among group members or between the teacher and students. For discussions to be productive, students should be equipped with foundational knowledge about the subject matter beforehand.

7.0 Method of Source

The source method represents an effective approach to teaching history in higher education. By incorporating various sources, educators can enhance students' interest in historical events. This method allows students to engage with different perspectives on events, fostering a deeper understanding. The source method involves utilizing primary sources of information to clarify concepts, establish theories, or describe historical occurrences. It can be particularly effective at the start of a lesson to spark student motivation. For instance, when discussing the Mughal Empire, an instructor might present images of the Red Fort, Taj Mahal, or Jama Masjid. This approach can be further developed throughout the lesson to connect events or theories with the factual content presented in the text. Historical sources serve as fundamental clues for studying history, encompassing documents, artifacts, archaeological sites, oral histories, stone inscriptions, images, recorded sounds, relics, and ruins. The source method, which emphasizes learning from original materials, provides a more profound comprehension of history compared to traditional methods. These historical sources are essentially "traces" from the past. While many history textbooks may lack engagement, they should not be entirely excluded from the curriculum. Instead, they can serve as a framework for the course while also

integrating diverse sources, particularly primary ones. Selecting compelling historical sources that resonate with students is crucial. For example, during the exploration of India's independence movement, students can read works by Indian authors, playwrights, and poets who vividly depict the experiences of people during that era. These primary sources, along with many others, can significantly impact students, inspiring them and fostering a passionate learning environment. The researcher was also covered primary and secondary sources in this study.

8.0 Reference Methods in History Education:

The reference method in history education involves utilizing documents, texts, and books that align with historical events, incorporating manuscripts alongside the standard school curriculum. History encompasses the past, present, and future, and we access historical events primarily through actual references such as books, texts, correspondence, and physical artifacts. These references include a variety of relics inherited from earlier periods, encompassing material evidence like events, texts, treaties, official correspondence, personal diaries, as well as structures such as palaces, temples, churches, and mosques, along with engravings on walls. This approach enables students to examine texts and historical events directly from their original sources, facilitating careful study and analysis. It also connects various events, allowing for informed conclusions. Fundamentally, the reference method emphasizes critical thinking to uncover truths through research and the observation of evidence, linking new findings with existing knowledge. When students engage directly with original sources, they acquire fundamental insights into historical periods and understand the sequence of events that transpired, the repercussions of which may persist over time. This practice equips them to anticipate the trajectory of contemporary events and make connections to future developments. For this approach to be effective, the history teacher must actively fulfill their role by curating historical materials for instruction, choosing relevant texts from these sources, compiling them, and presenting them to the students.

9.0 The use of field trips as a pedagogical approach in history education

The utilization of field trips as a method for teaching history is highly beneficial. These excursions allow students to gather firsthand information by observing historical sites, artifacts, events, and processes in their authentic contexts. The primary aim of a field trip should not merely be to provide a break from the classroom environment, but rather to enhance understanding of the subject matter or to address specific questions. Field trips enable students to directly witness local historical conditions, which can often seem unengaging in a traditional classroom setting due to a lack of tangible resources. They serve to bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and real-world examples. By incorporating field trips, the monotony of conventional teaching can be alleviated, fostering a more engaging and student-centered learning experience. When students participate in these excursions, they become more active participants in their education. During these trips, they have the opportunity to see and interact with primary sources related to their studies, such as memorials, statues, inscriptions, coins, monuments, and notable buildings. Educational field trips offer numerous advantages for both educators and students, as teachers can guide students to various historical sites, including museums, forts, palaces, monuments, and temples, to explore the narratives, events, and figures that shape history.

10.0 Conclusion

In teaching history, educators must adopt student-centered approaches. Historically, students have often perceived the subject as dull and repetitive. However, there are numerous strategies to make history engaging. Regardless of whether the focus is on ancient or modern events, teachers can spark greater interest by being innovative. This includes integrating contemporary issues, local historical narratives, music, film, enthusiasm, primary sources, well-researched secondary sources, and modern technology into their lessons. Such an engaging teaching style can motivate students to delve deeper into historical studies and combat their apathy towards the subject. Additionally, enthusiasm plays a crucial role in revitalizing history classes; a lack of it undermines the educational experience. History teachers must exhibit passion to inspire their students effectively. They should possess a deep understanding of their subject and strive to expand their knowledge continuously. In the 21st century, students have evolved, necessitating fresh approaches and teaching methodologies. History educators should engage with students' interests beyond the classroom, maintain an open and positive attitude, and consistently refresh their content and academic expertise. The growth of the teacher is closely linked to the knowledge and application of that knowledge by the students. Given that history relies on the acceptance of facts, the authenticity of information becomes even more critical. Therefore, history teachers should endeavor to study and incorporate verified facts based on new discoveries that challenge previous assumptions. To achieve this, they must be adept in innovative techniques to create effective teaching methods.

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