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Teaching Methods in History Learning

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ABSTRACT

Few educators would deny the need to teach history in our secondary schools, colleges, and universities. History involves what people have done and created in the past. It includes politics, religion, leisure and social activities, and day to day life. As humans, we should recognize history as an integral part of our lives. This makes history teaching a challenge for anyone considering this Profession. Recently, however, it seems as though history sometimes takes a "back seat" to other social sciences (like economics and political science). There is a great need to teach history teachers how to teach. This means beginning their training while the prospective teachers are graduated. There are several methods a teacher can use to make history more vibrant. Active learning techniques, films, library research, and historical fiction can all be used to make teaching and learning on history more invigorating. Regardless of what methods are used, however, it is important to apply a humanistic approach when teaching history. By reviewing some of the recent literature about teaching history, this paper describes what are the teaching methods now being used to make history classes more interesting.

Keywords:History, Teaching Methods

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the different methods that can be adopted effectively in the classroom transaction of History. This include the traditional as well as modern methods adopted by the History Teachers. Generally teaching methods are adopted to transact the curricular materials to students. The purpose of adopting each and every methods will be clear to educational practitioners. It is aimed to create certain desirable changes of behaviour through the transaction of Knowledge in History. It is done in the classroom between the teacher and the students through a series of planned activities performed by the teacher in the classroom. Those planned activities are the tactics to communicate the curriculum is the Method of teaching.

1.2. DEFINITION OF KEYWORDS

- Teaching Method: A Method of teaching is primarily a scientific way of transacting curriculum, keeping in mind the psychological and physical requirement of the children. These methods are means to attaining predetermined goals. In fact, it form the most important link in the teaching cycle and is the dynamic phenomenon in teaching.
- History: History was 'an unchanging account of past' (Aristotle). It is 'a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past' (E.H Carr). Simply, it is the study of past events, particularly in human affairs.

1.2. NEED FOR A VARIETY OF TEACHING METHODS

- To make the subject interesting, vital and lively. For instance, teacher could adopt lecture or discussion or combination of these methods to lend colour to class teaching.

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- To avoid monotony, different lessons require different approaches of teaching. If a teacher always adopt same method, it will be monotonous.
- To lead to total development of learner, realization of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains will be done. A single method cannot lead to such a total development

1.3. CHARRACTERISTICS OF A GOOD TEACHING METHOD

- They should aim at inculcating love of work.
- They should aim at providing opportunities to pupils to apply the knowledge that has been acquired by them.
- They should expand the range of student's interest.
- They should shift emphasis from verbalism and memorization to learning through purposeful, concrete and realistic situations and too in a scientific manner.

2. TEACHING METHODS IN HISTORY LEARNING

There are so many teaching methods to teach topics in history along with the traditional lecture method. Let's make a peep into different methods;

2.1. STUDENT CENTERED ACTIVE LEARNING METHODS

One suggestion is to use active learning techniques, which actually involve the students in the learning process. It is the way to instruction that involves active engaging of students with the course material through discussions, problem solving, case studies, role plays and other methods. Mc Andrews (1991) describes several methods he uses in history courses.

2.1.1. Debate

A debate requires students to critically analyse a certain historical problem and is an excellent way to show two sides of a picture. For instance, the history teacher might ask the students to debate a question "Who were Aryans? Where was the original homeland of Aryans? ". First the class could be divided into two separate groups. Then each group should be given reading and background material that supports one historical view of the Aryan Problem. Finally, the two groups would engage in a debate, with guidance from the teacher. The debate would help students think more critically.

2.1.2. Simulation

Simulation learning is the process where students study a historical topic in a Simulated Learning Environment (SLE) before studying actual textbook. These environments use different scenarios and arrangements, and vary from reality. This is a method for having the students take an active part in the educational process. It need the student act out certain historic events from which students can draw historical lessons. An example of simulation is having a class act out the "Round Table Conferences 1931" where each of student simulate the roles of historic persons who took part in that.

2.1.3.. Demonstration

Another active learning method is the use of a demonstration, which is "an oral exposition of a historical issue demonstrating chance and continuity between past and present". Using this method, a group of students is expected to present a demonstration, under the guidance of the teacher. For example, in teaching about "Bi Polar Politics after Second World War" student in the group would become a representative of some country, say USA or USSR. The students would then report to the rest of the class on, their country's views and policies.

2.1.4. Problem Solving Method

It is a process, an ongoing activity in which we take what we know to discover what we don't know. It involves overcoming obstacles by generating hypotheses, testing those predictions, and arriving at satisfactory solutions. Problem-solving involves three basic functions:

- Seeking information
- Generating new knowledge
- Making decisions

It is a very real part of the curriculum. It presupposes that students can take on some of the responsibility for their own learning and can take personal action to solve problems, resolve conflicts, discuss alternatives, and focus on thinking as a vital element of the curriculum. It provides students with opportunities to use their newly acquired knowledge in meaningful, real-life activities and assists them in working at higher levels of thinking.

Each of these methods, when supplemented with appropriate reading material, can be used in any history classroom. Each method really involves the students in the process of learning history.

2.2. TEACHER CENTERED LEARNING METHODS

In teacher centered education, students put all of their focus on the teacher. Teacher talk and the students exclusively listen. When education is teacher centered, the classroom remains orderly. Students are quiet, and teacher retain full control of the classroom and its activities. Taken to its most extreme interpretation, teachers are the main authority figure in a teacher centered instruction model.

2.2.1. Lecture Method

Lecture method of teaching is the oldest teaching method applied in educational institution. This teaching method is one way channel of communication of information. Students' involvement in this teaching method is just to listen and sometimes pen down some notes if necessary during the lecture, combine the information and organized it. One of the problems in this method is to grab the attention of students in class room. The main advantages of Lecture Method of Teaching is that a large amount the topics can be covered in a single class period.

2.2.2. Story Telling Method

Stories will stay with people much longer than facts or statistics. If a teacher becomes an excellent storyteller, he or she can ensure that any concept they teach will be remembered for years to come. Storytelling has been around as long as humankind. It is one of the most effective ways to communicate an important truth to another person. It is a connection point between two people. It gives meaning, context, and understanding in a world that is often filled with chaos and disorder. Because of this, educators must use stories if they hope to reach their students.

2.2.3. Biographical Method

Biography is the story of the life of a great man or woman in whom the society may be interested. As important events, turn around the lives of great individuals, History can be taught through the Biographical method. They are presented in a chronological order to emphasis the noble deeds of great persons. Its major advantages are

- Providing natural interest to pupils
- Inculcating social and moral virtues
- Simple and motivating

In recent years, more teachers have moved toward a student centered approach. However, some students maintain that teacher centered education is the more effective strategy. In most cases, it is best for teachers to use a combination of approaches to ensure that all student needs are met. A Teacher know a classroom better than anyone, so teacher will decide what works best for students.

3.3. METHODS USING PRIMARY SOURCES

Historical primary sources are the traces left behind in the past. A History Teacher can taught a systematic account of past event with the help of these historical sources. They are classified as follows

- Archaeological sources
- Literary sources
- Oral Sources

3.3.1. Field trips to Monuments

Educational tours and field trips in India that cover India's historical and cultural sights, we can travel to amazing monuments. Here we can see the magnificent forts and palaces, tombs and mosques and splendid temples and churches of India. It will help us learn about the art and architecture of ancient cultures. By this, we can see beautiful sculpture and carvings on the walls of heritage buildings, marvel at the skill of painters and artists who created murals and images on the walls of caves and temples in India. The exquisite calligraphy and carvings on Mughal monuments are amazing works of art, which will fill you with wonder, on educational tours of India. Some important monuments in India for Historical studies are:

- Taj Mahal Agra
- Group of Monuments, Hampi
- Ajanta Caves Aurangabad
- Fatehpur Sikri Complex Fatehpur Sikri
- Group of Monuments Mahabalipuram. Etc

3.3.2. Study Tours to Archives

Archives, also called records or record office, repository for an organized body of records produced or received by a public, semi-public, institutional, or business entity in the transaction of its affairs and preserved by it or its successors. These archives preserves primary literary sources for historical reconstruction. The sources in an Archives can be broadly classified into:

- Sacred Literatures, like the Vedas, Upanishads, Canonical texts etc.
- Secular Literatures, like books on grammar and medicine, autobiographies etc.
- Foreign and Official Accounts, like accounts of foreign travelers to India, British and East India Company Records etc.

The major Archives in India are:

- National Archives of India Kolkata
- National Mission for Manuscripts, Delhi
- National Film Archive of India, Pune

3.3.3. Study Tours to Museums

Museum is the institution dedicated to preserving and interpreting the primary tangible evidence of humankind and the environment. In its preserving of this primary evidence, the museum differs markedly from the library, with which it has often been compared, for the items housed in a museum are mainly unique and constitute the raw material of study and research. Museums preserve the rich inscriptions, coins and other artefacts. These epigraphic and numismatic sources provide primary knowledge of our history. The major Museums in India are:

- Gandhi Smriti Museum, Delhi
- Nehru Memorial Museum, Delhi
- Indian Museum, Kolkata

Primary sources are the raw materials of history namely original documents and objects that were created at the time under study. They are different from secondary sources, accounts that retell, analyse, or interpret events, usually at a distance of time or place. It is duty of a history teacher to bringing young people into close contact with these unique, often profoundly personal documents and objects can give them a sense of what it was like to be alive during a long-past era. It will help students analyse primary sources and can also prompt curiosity and improve critical thinking and analysis skills.

2.4. METHODS USING SECONDARY SOURCES

A secondary source interprets and analyses primary sources. These sources are one or more steps removed from the event. Secondary sources may contain pictures, quotes or graphics of primary sources. For a historical research project, secondary sources are generally scholarly books and articles Textbooks, journal articles, history criticisms, commentaries, encyclopaedias etc.

2.4.1. Teach using Traditional Libraries

Library is an essential part of all educational institutions. Traditionally, it is collection of books used for reading or study, or the building or room in which such a collection is kept. The word derives from the Latin *liber*, "book," whereas a Latinized Greek word, *bibliotheca*, is the origin of the word for library in German, Russian, and the Romance languages. The libraries accommodate textbooks, journals, fictions, articles etc. for historical studies. For instance, important history learning textbook we found at libraries include;

- Ancient India by RC Majumdar
- A History of Medieval India by Satish Chandra
- History of Modern India by Bipan Chandra
- India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy by Ramachandra Guha

2.4.2. Teach using Digital Libraries

A digital library, also called an online library, an internet library, a digital repository, or a digital collection is an online database of digital objects that can include text, still images, audio, video, digital documents, or other digital media formats or a library accessible through the internet. Objects can consist of digitized content like print or photographs, as well as originally produced digital content like word processor files or social media posts. In addition to storing content, digital libraries provide means for organizing, searching, and retrieving the content contained in the collection. Advantages of digital library are:

- No physical boundary- The user of a digital library need not to go to the library physically. People from all over the world can gain access to the same information, as long as an Internet connection is available.
- Round the clock availability- A major advantage of digital libraries is that people can gain access 24*7 to the information.

- Multiple access- The same resources can be used simultaneously by a number of institutions and patrons.
- Preservation and conservation- Digitization is not a long-term preservation solution for physical collections, but does succeed in providing access copies for materials that would otherwise fall to degradation from repeated use. Digitized collections and born-digital objects pose many preservation and conservation concerns that analog materials do not.
- Space-Whereas traditional libraries are limited by storage space, digital libraries have the potential to store much more information, simply because digital information requires very little physical space to contain them and media storage technologies are more affordable than ever before

2.5. METHODS USING TEACHING AIDS

A teaching aid is anything used by a teacher to help teach a lesson or make it more interesting to students. Teaching aids can come in almost any form. Some of the most common are pictures, videos, charts, flashcards, and objects, like three-dimensional models or educational toys. The term teaching aid is used to identify such materials as being a supplement to basic teaching (for example, teaching through a lecture). Teaching aids are intended to engage students in the topic being taught. Although teaching aids are sometimes more associated with elementary schooling, they can be used at every level of education and for every subject. Teaching aid should not be confused with a teacher's aide, who assists a teacher in the classroom.

2.5.1. Graphic Aids

They are two-dimensional materials having no depth which communicate facts, ideas and relationships clearly through words, lines, drawings, symbols and pictures. Graphic aids can serve many educational objectives for group teaching of 20 to 30 students. They include;

- Charts- Flow charts, Pedigree charts organisation charts are useful in history classes.
- Maps- They are flat representation of earth's surface which convey information by means of lines, symbols, colours etc. Political Maps, Historical map etc. are useful in history classes.
- Graphs- Visual representation of data. Line graph, bargraph, pie graph are useful in history classes.
- Timelines- Used to clarify time relationship, to relate events to major time periods and to relate events in one country to those of another
- Pictures- The photographs and illustrations in the textbook add interest and to clarify difficult ideas.
- Cartoons- It convey idea by means of caricature, humour, stereotype, satire etc.
- Posters – It convey a single idea in a way that can be grasped at the glance.

They help to visualise abstract concepts which are difficult to understand - concepts of size, rate of growth, inner structure of an object or machine etc. Moreover, it reduce the amount of verbal talking and help in giving clear explanations; visuals in charts, graphs, diagrams and posters, cut down words. It also present the information in a systematic manner. Since majority of them are formal aids, they have to be very systematic and organised.

2.5.2. Display Boards

The following are the major display boards used in History classes;

- Chalk Board- Use it to list reading materials, note assignments, summarize a discussion, so on.
- Bulletin Board- The name itself implies place for bulletins, new items, announcements, multifarious items that are of interesting.
- Flannel Board- It helps in presenting events or ideas in sequence as a story unfolds, a report is given, a demonstration is performed etc.
- Magnetic Board- Small magnets are attached to objects, pictures, cutouts and other items to hold them to the thin iron sheeting used to make this board.
- Peg Board- It is used for combining flat and three dimensional materials, the latter being supported by specially made hooks and clips.

2.5.3. Three Dimensional Aids

The following are the major display 3D aids used in History classes;

- Models- It is the 3D representation of a real thing.
- Realia- It means real things or artifacts, including specimens, items in museums etc.
- Dioramas- They are scenes recreated in perspective, using 3D models to depict the activity.
- Panoramas- They are broad scenes that use models to depict a topic they are not necessarily in perspective.
- Globe- It is the accurate representation of earth's surface.

2.5.4. Audio Visual Aids

The following are the major display 3D aids used in History classes;

- Television- It telecasts Instructional programs to support classroom instruction
- Video Taps- In the 20th AD, storage of instruction for repetitive use is easily accomplished with it.

- Radio- Despite unpopular with advent of TV, many radio stations continue to feature educative programmes.
- Computer with Internet- Essential part of today's education
- Mobile phone with Internet (Smart phone) - E learning revolutionized with advent of Smart phones

2.5.5. Projected Aids

The following are the major display 3D aids used in History classes;

- Films- The use of film as a historical teaching tool has been greatly overlooked. News-reels, propaganda films, television commercials, and historical documentaries can be used to help paint a meaningful picture of the past. Films like Gandhi (1982), The Legend of Bhagat Singh (2002), Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose: The Forgotten Hero (2005) and so on are helpful in history teaching.
- Projectors- Over Head Projectors enable teacher to project material while facing the class, whereas the Opaque projector is unique in that it will project the image of opaque materials on to a screen/wall/chalkboard.

2.6. OTHER METHODS

There also so many other methods other than mentioned earlier to make history classes more interesting;

2.6.1. Project Method

Project method of teaching has evolved from the philosophy of pragmatists. It is experience-centered strategy related to life-situation. This teaching strategy focus to socialize a child and to achieve cognitive, affective and psychomotor objectives. This teaching strategy is based on the following principles of Utility, readiness, learning by Doing, Socialization, and Inter-disciplinary Approach etc.

2.6.2. Peer Tutoring Method

Peer tutoring or teaching is one of the best ways to master a particular subject. It is a method of teaching, where a student instructs another student, wherein the former will be an expert and the latter a novice. This paves the learner student to learn without depending upon the teacher, and the teacher-student to revise the topic again, on the belief that "To teach is to learn twice" (Collins).

2.6.3. Assignment Method

It is the method of teaching is the most popular form of student-centered instruction. Assignments may include essays, research papers, oral presentations, projects, labs, or collaborative learning activities. Using the assignment method, the teacher creates an assignment with clear instructions, milestones, and grading criteria based on an outcome that students need to achieve. The teacher monitors and advises students as they work on the assignment and provides feedback that challenges students to improve.

2.6.4. Supervised Study Method

Supervised study means a shift from mass teaching to individual or group instruction. Supervised study affords a practical method of teaching pupils what to study and how to study and to bring the pupils into intimate contact with the teacher and the learning process. The classes generally comprise heterogeneous groups with bright, average and below average students in each class. It is, thus impossible for a teacher to cater to individual differences. This situation can be remedied by supervised study.

3. CONCLUSION

None of the teaching methods describe here will have an effect on students, unless they are taught from a humanistic perspective. History must be presented in a fashion in which students can relate it to their lives and find meaning in it. Marrow (1982/83) tells us that our history teaching should include recognition and positive reinforcement for the students in the classroom. Teachers and students should work together to answer questions and solve problems. The main objective is to involve students. If history teachers presented themselves as fellow learners rather than as experts, the classroom would be a more humanistic place. Marrow goes on to, suggest that "Tailoring a course to satisfy student diversity... is an important ingredient in using a humanistic approach" This approach, used in conjunction with some of the methods mentioned, makes history much more fulfilling for both the students and the teachers.

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