

How and Why to Teach and Learn History in our Schools?

Shaib Mohd*

Do you ever conjecture: Why do we teach and learn about the past? How is history taught in the Classroom? How can teachers induce students to learn about the past? These are just questions that I feel would be answered in this paper.

If you are ruse about the past and want to learn how it will shape our future, you should mull over studying history. History is the study of life in society in the past, in all its aspects, concerning present developments and future hopes. It is the story of a man in time, an inquiry into the past based on evidence. Indeed, shreds of evidence are the raw material of history teaching and learning. It is an investigation into what occurred in the past, when it happened, and how it happened. As well as postulated by the renowned historian EH Carr in his book *What is History*. “History is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past” (Carr p.55) History, being a study of the human mind, is interested in the thoughts and motivations of the actors in history. Therefore, Collingwood suggested that a historian must reconstruct history by using historical imagination to re-enact the thought processes of historical persons based on

* Ex-Research Scholar of the Department of History & an Alumina of Govt. College of Education, Srinagar. Presently working as an Executive Officer in the Department of Home Affairs, Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir.

information and evidence from historical sources (Collingwood, pp.70, 247)

History trains the students in understanding past political structures, institutions, cultural and traditional patterns, the genesis of the education system, social and economic standards of people in remote past. It helps the students to analyze it and trace the course of all such patterns of life. History teaches us cause and effect relationships. History is dependent on knowing what happened first. Thus all these things are vital for historians to explore and present for a proper understanding of history.

Why is the teaching of history important for us?

We cannot escape history (Abraham Lincoln). We know that history is the most preferred subject for the candidates who prepare for Indian Civil Services. However, in spite of this imperative fact, in most of the schools at the secondary level students remain shilly-shally and hesitate to opt for history as a subject. One of the common reasons for that is lack of skills and proper way of teaching history in our schools. Presenting history simply as a chain of facts and narration of past events makes it boring and exhaustive. A vital part of cause and effect relationship and interpretation of facts is not being taught at early levels. So the moral of real history learning is that well-planned teaching methods with excellent knowledge of the subject and effectively delivered in the class will create keen interest among students in that particular subject.

How to teach and learn History

1. Admirable knowledge of the subject is essentially important; a teacher must be abreast with excellent

knowledge of the subject matter. That will fascinate and captivate the attention of the students towards history learning

2. Effective lesson plan; lesson plan plays important role in making effective teaching-learning possible in classroom situations. The lesson plan must contain various parts like objectives of the lesson plan, set induction part, popper questions, debate- discussion, methods of teaching, homework, and recapitulation
3. Methods of teaching history; Textbook Method, Story-telling Method, Discussion-cum Narration method, Problem-solving method, Source method, Project method, Source method, Lecture method, Think-pair-share method, etc.
4. Viable Use of Subject Dictionary; Dictionary can be prepared for easy understanding of difficult and important words of a history subject that can help students in understanding the basics in history.
5. Map Reading; Map reading is essentially required for a proper understanding of geographical locations, boundaries, extent, and spread of various empires and dynasties during the past. It develops a sense of pride among the students regarding the glory of their ancient past. While teaching history in actual classroom situations we must use charts and maps and demonstrate the important locations and places with the help of a pointer.
6. Digital Classrooms; Digital and smart classrooms can be used for teaching history interestingly. Digital

content and the use of digital boards will invigorate and enliven the students' teaching-learning process.

7. Teaching aids: These can be used according to the lessons. Wooden replica of Ashokan pillar, models of various monuments, PowerPoint presentations, storybooks based on Great Indian Personalities, etc
8. Notebooks: Notebooks can be prepared both by teachers and students, these notebooks would be as sample copies to guide the students properly. The notebook must be decorated with maps, charts, and sketches of various empires and personalities as per the syllabus.
9. Museums; Museum rooms or resource rooms can be established in our schools for providing evidence of the past happenings in our schools. Such rooms will provide us evidence of past patterns of life, museums do provide real things like artifacts, documents, paintings, films, photographs, sometimes examples of art and architecture. All these things are of great value to a teacher and historian and develop a sense an aesthetic pleasure amongst the students.
10. Heritage club; A heritage club can be maintained by the school authorities where a group of students can be involved in creating awareness regarding the preservation and conservation of archaeological sites, monuments, and shrines of the area.

CONCLUSION

History is a versatile discipline that will amplify your cultural knowledge and moral and ethical understanding of

the world we live in. By studying history we'll gain a range of transferable skills, from informed citizenship and critical thinking to research and general awareness. What's more significant, the knowledge attained through the study of history is applicable in a wide range of disciplines and can pilot to diverse employment opportunities. Studying history outside is remarkably popular. It's one of the conventional disciplines in the humanities, and it's earned an age-old reputation as a foundation stone of the Bachelor of Arts.

Someone has rightly remarked those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it". Studying history permits us to develop an enhanced understanding of humanity, a good edifice of acquaintance, and a sympathetic understanding of historical events and trends, especially over the past century, which enables us to develop a much greater appreciation for current events today. That is why studying history at schools is of paramount importance and essentially needed to use the above methods of teaching for making the subject more interesting and effective for enriching students with sound knowledge. Remember studying history is not merely to memorize lists of battles, but, we have to look into the causes of and relationships between important events. Historians do not simply record what they took place, but try to work out how and why of it. This is why the study of history comprises historiography and philosophical theories of history. It also includes epistemology. Historians ponder upon different types of evidence in a forensic method, trying to ascertain which records are trustworthy and supportive.

The study of history, consequently, is imperative since it facilitates students to understand the past, and therefore the present, and it teaches vital skills to find out the truth.

Apart from the above points, history is an unavoidable part of every other academic discipline. Scientists study the history of science; literary scholars study the history of literature. An in-depth understanding of any subject requires the study of history.

REFERENCES

Adams and Millar (1982) *Museums and the Use of Evidence in History Teaching* (*Historical Association*).

Block (2017) *The Historians Craft*. Delhi Aakar Books.

Carl, (2009) *The value of History as a school subject in an age of science and technology*, University of Stellenbosch.

Carr (1991) *what is History* (UK Penguin).

Collingwood (1994) *The Idea of History* –Aug Oxford University Press.

Robert and Weiner (1995) *History: Teaching and Methods*, Texas Tech University. <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/>