



VIRTUAL TOURISM AS A LEARNING TOOL IN PEDAGOGY OF HISTORY

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ABSTRACT :

Virtual tourism, a latest trend on Internet, brings the virtual reality at our doorstep. It augments the reality by using multimedia elements like sound effects, music, narration and text. It would be blasphemous to ignore the potential it holds as a learning tool and the subsequent birth of the possibilities that arise from the intermingling of virtual tourism with pedagogy of History. This paper presents the current scenario of pedagogy of History and the role of virtual tourism as learning in teaching of this subject. It talks about the need of virtual tourism and its beneficial role in deepening of the student's understanding of History. It also sees the upsides and the downsides of this pedagogical technique and the effect it lays on the students.



KEYWORDS : *Virtual tourism, learning tool, Pedagogy of History.*

INTRODUCTION

History is a subject which is best learned through field experience and narrative stories instead of textbooks. As an educator, we venture to help history come alive in the classrooms. The constraint in this endeavor is the ability to have the students actually travels to these places that they are learning about. Virtual tourism makes that an achievable recourse. Educators have never before been presented with such an opportunity to capture the fancy of their learners like they do today. Not only can students scout the historically relevant locations, but also transverse through many of the world's most exclusive museum and cultural centers while sitting in the classrooms. Virtual field tours license students to investigate places that would be hard to visit generally. Elementary school students especially reap its benefits since their school trips are ordinarily restricted by distance and time constraints. Students of all ages can be acquainted to far-off locations through a virtual tour. Additionally, Virtual field tours permit educators to uncover places which are uncommon in their geographic region in the classrooms.

PRESENT SCENARIO OF PEDAGOGY OF HISTORY:-

History as a subject has a reputation of being monotonous and mundane. Students dread this subject and have been conditioned to see it as a highly theorized subject. Most of the students fail to understand the utility of studying this subject and cannot see past the dates. The teachers to get caught up in the timeline of syllabus completion & often neglect the needs of the students. The teachers also find themselves limited within the classroom. There is an undeniable need for covering this gap and VR provides an effective alternative for this problem.

With proper utilization of the Internet, it is possible to increase the amount of information students can absorb during the experience. Virtual field trips cover an expansive range of topics which aim to meet learning standards with regard to different state, caste and age of students providing them with an inclusive environment. In traditional field trips, student safety is a matter of worry. Virtual field trips resolve the pressing issue of concern about student's safety almost completely. While the issue of online safety may also present during a virtual trip, teachers and school districts can easily tackle this concern through proper planning and appropriate internet filters. Though virtual field trips provide students with an assortment of educational experiences, they are still confined in the modes they provide these experiences through. Virtual field trips can only engage students in a limited way. Lack of sensory experiences can prove to be a downside.

VIRTUAL TOURISM:-

Virtual tourism is a strategic attempt at creating a virtual reality of an existing location using technology i.e., sounds, videos, moving and still images and giving the beholder control over hovering over it. Multimedia elements such as music, special effects, and narration are employed to enhance the quality of the virtual tour. The term virtual tour is describes an array of videos and photographic-based media. The word Panorama for instance, often refers to any continuous view of a video or a picture. It can either be a succession of photographs or panning video recording.

In 1994, around mid-90s, we find the initial usage of the phrase 'Virtual Tour'. The first occurrence of a virtual tour was when a museum visit intentioned to be an informational tour, which included virtual strolling through a three-dimensional rebuilding of Dudley Castle, located in England, as it, was in 1550. In order to accomplish this job use was made of a computer disc that operated with the help of lasers. A British engineer Colin Johnson created this disc. Queen Elizabeth II, in June 1994, was amongst one of the first people to be a part of virtual tour after the official opening of the visitor center.

The system, thus created, was termed as "*Virtual Tour, being a cross between Virtual Reality and Royal Tour.*" It is very difficult to exclude field trips from effective teaching of History. It helps the students connect with what they learn in the classroom with the world outside and is an indispensable part of Pedagogy of History. While a History teacher would be thrilled to lead her students on exciting tours, virtual tours provide an efficient alternative. Today, we can go well beyond the pictures and videos to provide the students with opportunities to travel to the ends of the globe in high definition with skillfully curretted 3-D reconstructions of monumental architecture, and to relish the 360 degree panoramic views of relevant sites.

It is an undeniable fact that the Internet has revolutionized our entire species. When there was a time when people were apprehensive about travelling to a distant place and now, even the Moon is within our reach. With time a lot has changed and travelling is no different. People no longer have to travel long distances to behold the majestic beautiful locations, this has now become a part of our reality within the comfort of our own homes using the Internet. Virtual Tourism has been actively encouraged in school and universities as it presents an extremely life like experience to the students.

VIRTUAL TOURISM AS A LEARNING TOOL IN PEDAGOGY OF HISTORY:-

In today's internet driven world, teachers are adopting different innovative teaching styles to reach their students better. Schools lay a greater emphasis on the experience value of teaching as opposed to the number of texts which are to be read. Use of technology as a learning tool has greatly amplified the learning quotient of students and has made them more participative in the course curriculum. 3D films and Virtual Tourism have proved to be crucial for engrossing the students of History which in turn helps in better absorption of the knowledge about the ancient times. A virtual tour can be successfully organized for students with the help of following things that can be easily borrowed from a computer lab in the school: -

- Computer
- Internet access
- A Projector and Screen (optional)

DIFFERENT TOOLS OF VIRTUAL TOURISM IN PEDAGOGY OF HISTORY:-

- **Panoramic Pictures:** - Paintings and art forms were arguably one of the first relics used as a learning tool. Panoramic pictures have made it convenient for everyone to get a deeper understanding of these historical pieces. Panoramic pictures are now easily available on a variety of platforms of the internet.
- **Virtual reality Boxes:** - VR Box brings the 2D/3D videos into a more realistic plane for the viewer. Educators now have the ability to bring history alive, to let the learners walk beside giant dinosaurs and live like an ape man. For instance, Google Cardboard is one such tool which provides a simulative cinematic experience to its users.
- **3-D Tours:-** It is becoming a trend with historical places and museums to make available a VR version of the place on their respective websites. This provides a golden opportunity to the students and teachers to tour a place without actually going there and provides the students a better walkthrough of these places which perhaps a textbook would fail to do.
- **Projectors – Films and Documentaries:-** Films and documentaries related to the subject are available in huge numbers online which help the students get the background and story related to the subject taught. TV Channels like the History Channel and National Geographic also provide some very useful content.
- **Google Earth:** - Google Earth is a ground breaking tool which has incredible potential for History teaching. It helps the students in cruising around the planet and experiencing firsthand the different paradigm of the earth in its various dimensions.

Impact of Virtual Tourism in Pedagogy of History:-

- **Virtual field trips: A completely new and innovative way to learn** - Inclusion of virtual field tours are ensure more interactive learning of the curriculum. It helps to alleviate the learning experience of the students without abandoning the safe cocoon of the classroom.
- **Locations:** - Within a matter of a few minutes, teachers can now take their students anywhere after a few easy clicks on the internet. From the times of Harappa Civilization to the caves of Ajanta and Ellora caves, every location is at the learner's disposal and the only limit is the teacher's imagination.
- **Inclusiveness:** - Computer field trip eliminates the need of money and time. Every student has a fair chance of attending the tour, regardless of their financial or domestic situations. It levels the grounds of the learners and promotes inclusion of all classes.
- **Safety and Legal Issues:** - The school administrators take a lot of pains to ensure student's safety on field trips and to protect the school from legal problems making them apprehensive about organizing such trips. Virtual field trips effectively eliminate such issues.
- **Learning:** - Learning becomes an exciting and interactive experience with the virtual field trips. To aid the learning process and simulate the students' virtual field tours includes videos, audio clips and pictures.
- **Time:-**An undeniable plus of virtual field trips is the reduced travel time. Now students have the opportunity of visiting several places within no time. There's no need to skip a whole day of school for a field trip.

FEW ADVANTAGES AS WELL AS DISADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL TOURISM:-

Although it is not possible for virtual field tours to eliminate the need for actual trips to monuments and places but they are the next best thing available. The real experience is definitely imperative, but the advantages of Virtual field trips are amazing.

ADVANTAGES:-

- Virtual field trips are suited to a group of users with different levels and to the needs of to individual students as well.
- Virtual tours provide rich learning experiences and prove to be a vital learning and teaching tools.

- It is especially beneficial for those students who prefer self-learning and look out for hands on experience.
- Virtual field tours also conveniently flexible and accessible for everyone.
- Lastly, virtual tours can also prove to be a great pre or post learning experience after an actual field trip. It will construct upon what a child is to undergo or has just underwent in the field trip.

DISADVANTAGES:-

The disadvantages are limited, but they cannot be ignored. They are-

- Limited information about workings of the computer may baffle a person in turn halting the tour altogether.
- Absence of physical encounter with the artifact is another disadvantage of the virtual tours.
- Virtual excursions fail to proffer smell, touch and acoustical experiences.
- From a teacher's point of view, demerits would consist of dearth of permanent sites, a huge number of inappropriate locations or of poor quality, and the difficulty discovering the relevant locations.

Nowadays large numbers of teachers are turning to technology for inventive answers as it eliminates the need of money for effective activities and events. Virtual field trips, which use an amalgamation of images, video and text about a specific time or place to set forth knowledge and pertinent information to students via the Internet, are becoming a popular alternate to conventional field tours. Many students and teachers believe the benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

Things to remember when organizing a Virtual Tour for students:-

- It is primal to identify and classify the level of students participating in the virtual tour.
- A Virtual Tour should make headway in a well thought out manner. It should have a beginning, middle and an end. The teacher should ensure total class participation by acting as tour guide.
- An informal and relaxed tone could make the tour an indelible experience for both the students and the teachers. The teacher should fabricate a sense of adventure and excitement throughout their journey.
- Employment of other techniques such as role plays, musical tones and 3D films can help in manufacturing an inspirational and stimulating virtual journey.

CONCLUSION:-

As discussed above, virtual field trips are becoming undeniably famous with school students as well as teachers. They are often presented on computers through different means such as the Internet, CD-ROM and learning software's etc. and can be used to deepen the understanding of the subject.

Although, when it comes to teaching history, actual field trips triumphs as the best method for engaging the students in historical indication by physically going to museums, sites of historical relevance, residences of author, or context related government buildings. Still we cannot deny that they are expensive and complicated to organize. Fortunately, we have now found an alternative to aid our problem and conveniently, one can now go to the site on the Web. While stationary images and texts are a part of some online virtual tours, others constitute of captivating three-dimensional simulations and animations, prospective videos, and much more. Virtual Tourism is an exceptional means through which one can inculcate crucial source matters into classroom teaching. Many schools as well as universities have included Virtual Field Trips as part of their course curriculum. Some claim that it is almost certain that virtual field trips will end up replacing the conventional field excursions at some point in time.

It is accurate that the plethora of diversity and relative affluence of conducting delivery of virtual field trips do offer some heavy benefits over conventional field trips. It also extends the pluses of diversity of knowledge to students as well as makes them proficient. Nevertheless, the students should essentially have conventional hands-on experience much needed for them to gain from opportunities that virtual field trips

have to offer. It is essential for both teachers and students alike to be aware of pros and cons involving Virtual Field Trips specifically in reference to the perspective of those who use it. This would help them to choose the relevant virtual field excursions as well as put them to finest use by turning them into learning and teaching aid.

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