



A STUDY OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT VIRTUAL TOURS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract: This study was undertaken to investigate the knowledge of secondary school teachers teaching History subject about the concept of virtual tours, and the tools/ apps available to create virtual tours. The data was collected from the fifty History teachers teaching in the schools affiliated to SSC and ICSE boards in Mumbai. The study revealed that teachers know the concept of virtual tours. Some teachers are aware of the online availability of virtual tours to various historical places. However, very few teachers know how to create virtual tours.

IndexTerms – virtual tours, secondary school teachers, in-service teachers

INTRODUCTION

History subject is best learned through direct experiences and narrative stories instead of textbooks. History teachers try to bring history alive in the classrooms using various techniques. Field trip strategy offers direct experience to students. Though first-hand experience gained through actual field trips is invaluable, it may not be possible to organize field trips due to time constrain. Virtual tours is an educational tool that makes it possible without commuting physically. In today's internet-driven world, teachers are adopting different teaching tools to reach their students better. Schools are laying a greater emphasis on the development of 21st-century skills among the students. The use of educational technology as a learning tool has greatly impacted the learning of students and made the process more participative.

The virtual tour is a collection of videos and photographic-based media. It consists of music, special effects, and narration to enhance the quality of the virtual tour. Virtual tours offer an innovative way to explore historically important places. The use of 360-degree images, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR), virtual tours makes the experience interactive and it helps in bringing history alive in the classroom. Virtual tours is a powerful tool to enhance the teaching of History and engage students in immersive learning experiences. It helps students by providing a first-hand experience of historical sites. The students get the opportunity to explore the places in 360-degree views without leaving the classroom.

The students could examine and analyze the artifacts in the museum by participating in the virtual tour. It develops critical thinking and interpretive skills among the students. By integrating virtual tours into their curriculum, history teachers can enhance the teaching-learning process, engage students, and foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of historical events, cultures, and civilizations. Thus, the teachers need to be aware of platforms facilitating the conduct of virtual tours. This would help them to choose the relevant virtual tours to teach content. It will also help teachers to use available virtual tours by turning them into learning resources. Educating teachers about these tools can facilitate the diverse needs of learners.

Understanding teachers' awareness of virtual tour apps will help promote the integration of technology and enhance the teaching and learning experiences of the students. The use of virtual tours will empower teachers to innovate teaching practices and improve student engagement in learning. Being a teacher educator, the researcher provides information about virtual tours as educational tools and motivates students of History method to use virtual tours while teaching History. Thus, the researcher was curious to know the awareness about virtual tours as a learning tool among the in-service teachers. The researcher also wanted to find out the knowledge about creating virtual tours to teach history among the in-service teachers.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

The study will help to assess awareness of virtual tours as an educational resource among the teachers. It will also help in understanding the knowledge of teachers about available online platforms providing virtual tours. Thus, it will help in identifying the level of digital literacy and familiarity with technology-enhanced learning tools among the teachers in the digital age.

The study will assess the knowledge of teachers about various virtual tour apps that can help educational institutions and policymakers develop training programs for teachers. The initiatives for the integration of virtual tours to teach History could be developed based on the results of the study.

OBJECTIVES:

- To understand of virtual tour concept among the in-service teachers
- To study the knowledge about the virtual tours available in online mode to teach History
- To study the knowledge about the platforms /apps to create virtual tours to teach History
- To study the knowledge about the process of creating virtual tours to teach History

METHODOLOGY:

The researcher utilized the survey method to study the topic. The survey was conducted to study the knowledge of History teachers about virtual tours as educational resource to teach History, knowledge about available virtual tours and the platforms providing facilities for creating virtual tours. The teachers who have joined the secondary schools recently have been chosen for the study assuming a new generation of teachers has been introduced to the latest educational technology during the Bachelor of Education program. The researcher used a self-created questionnaire to collect responses.

SAMPLE:

The in-service teachers of History subject from secondary schools in Mumbai was the population for study. The researcher randomly selected 50 in-service History teachers from the schools in Mumbai. The teachers were randomly selected from the schools affiliated to SSC board and ICSE board. The History teachers having less than five years of experience were selected for the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

All fifty respondents were aware of virtual tours as an educational resource/tool. All of these respondents knew the virtual tour concept through B Ed. curriculum. This clearly shows that the current syllabus of teacher education provides theoretical knowledge about the innovative educational technology that could be utilized in the teaching-learning process.

All the respondents knew that virtual tours are available online. However, 90% of respondents thought that the virtual tours could be utilized for teaching History. All the respondents believe that it's difficult to arrange field trips due to constrain of time, thus virtual tours of various places could be organized during the subject period using virtual tours available in online mode.

74% of respondents are aware of Google Earth as a tool to create virtual tours. But out of these only 50 % of respondents visited only two to three historical places using Google Earth and 35% of respondents tried using Google Earth to teach History content. Google Arts & Culture is an online platform that provides virtual tours of various Historical places and museums. 90% of the respondents have never explored the Google Art and Culture platform. No respondents have explored virtual tours available on indiaculture.gov.in (Ministry of Culture, Government of India), History.com. 70% of respondents have explored virtual tours available on websites like p4panorama.com, indiavrtours.com, airpano.com. 60% of respondents use virtual tours to teach History content. This shows that though History teachers are aware of the importance of virtual tours in the teaching of History, but very few teachers have explored the apps and platforms providing virtual tours of various historical places or museums. This infers that very few respondents had the internal motivation to search the resources available in online mode. Just 12% of respondents were aware of the apps to create virtual tours, but out of these only 50 % tried hand on the apps to prepare virtual tours.

All the respondents stated that they have never attended a workshop or training program related to learn how to use virtual tours in teaching History. The teachers voiced the need for training programs to teach the use of virtual tours and provide information about available tours. This shows that the teachers are willing to utilize modern technology but due to less knowledge about it they are not able to use it.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The Institutions can organize training programs to teach the creation and use of virtual tours in teaching History.
- Learning how to create virtual tours could be part of the practicum in the Bachelor of Education program
- In-service training program related to creation of virtual tours could be organized.
- Teachers can create the virtual tours as open-source material and make it available for all on the internet.

CONCLUSION:

The study recommends the use of virtual tours to teach History because it serves as a powerful educational tool to enrich the learning experience. It makes history teaching more interactive, and engaging. It will empower students to explore about the past and develop Historical Thinking skills among the students. By captivating the attention of students, it will foster a deep understanding of our past cultural heritage. Therefore, the History teachers need to be trained to utilize this tool in teaching History.

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