

Teacher Education Institute (TEI)

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History Social Science

We live in a time which can be both difficult and complicated. One of the main problems is the continual struggle to balance cultural with technological growth. A study of history can give us many clues to the types of solutions we should be seeking. It is therefore sad to see that many young people have only a limited sense of history and that it is usually a low priority amongst educators.

History should be the most marvellous subject for it is the story of man's past life on earth. It follows that the whole idea behind the teaching of history should be to communicate a grasp of, and a feeling for, human development as a whole.

Although single dates and events are of relevance, it is of far greater importance for students to obtain a feeling for all the quite different types of societies that have existed throughout history. How should this occur?

In the first place they need to fully appreciate that each one of us is part of the historical process. If we talk about, say, the achievements of the Greeks or Romans we need to transmit to students that they were not isolated and independent events on the stage of history but that our present development and ideas are intimately connected with them, as indeed with all the past.

The present is the result of the past and the future will be the result of the present and each student is part of that development. History should be a wonderful subject for it is living and dynamic. The process starts by relating local history to children's immediate experience; this will include descriptions of the local neighbourhood and area. Once this has been completed the local area can be studied in depth before the history of man is examined starting with the ancient civilizations and epochs.

Hopefully if children obtain insights into how their heritage influences their own culture they will be able to evaluate and obtain a perspective of happenings in their own lives and also of the society in which they live. They need to recognize that history describes the rise and development of different impulses expressed in quite different ways in different epochs.

The methodology by which these things are taught is also very important. Great emphasis should be placed on biographical detail allowing the child to identify, according to their temperament, with famous figures throughout history who possessed similar temperaments - both subjective and objective presentations are relevant.