

# Developing Historical Thinking In Students Through Virtual Educational Museums

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**Abstract:** This article explores the potential of virtual educational museums in developing students' historical thinking. In the context of limited access to traditional museums, the advantages of virtual museums, their interactive features, and ways of integration into the educational process are analyzed. The article provides methodological recommendations for the formation of skills in analyzing historical sources, a critical approach to events, and understanding historical processes in a virtual environment.

**Keywords:** Virtual-educational museums, historical thinking, education, interactivity, digital resources, critical analysis, cultural heritage.

**Introduction:** In today's era of rapid technological development, the educational process also requires continuous renewal. Along with traditional textbooks and teaching methods, digital tools are playing an increasingly important role in improving the effectiveness of education. In particular, the use of virtual museums is of particular importance in the process of forming historical thinking in students, that is, in the process of developing skills in analyzing past events, understanding their causes and consequences, and comparatively studying different points of view.

In the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 28, 2022, № DP-60, the formation of historical thinking, the popularization of national cultural heritage, and the widespread introduction of digital educational tools are defined as priority tasks in the "Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan." From this point of view, the issue of developing historical thinking in students through the effective use of virtual museums in the educational process is one of the urgent scientific and practical problems.

Virtual museums are digital platforms that provide online access to museum collections, regardless of their physical location. They not only showcase exhibits but also bring history to life through interactive elements, 3D models, virtual excursions, and

multimedia materials. This helps students to understand historical events more deeply, approach them critically, and independently expand their knowledge.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

It is known that the concept of historical thinking is expressed in a unique way in the directions of science. For example, in philosophical dictionaries, the concept of historical thinking is defined as the reappearance, remembrance, and appreciation of the material and spiritual wealth created by ancestors in the consciousness and daily practical activities of people [5].

Historical thinking is an important skill for students. It includes understanding chronology, analyzing cause-and-effect relationships, and interpreting the historical significance of events in the past and their relevance today. Historical thinking focuses on critical thinking and deep analysis rather than memorizing simple facts [6]. A similar opinion is expressed by I. Basri and his colleagues: "Historical thinking consists of several systemic stages: chronological thinking, understanding and interpreting cause-and-effect relationships, the concept of three-dimensional time, and deriving values and meanings from events. This model focuses on understanding the complexities of history and has been developed as a special teaching method in history

education [4].

Foreign scholar P. Seixas, expressing his opinion on views on historical thinking, notes that this is the ability of a person to comprehend historical reality, understand causality, and take a critical and logical approach to historical processes [9].

According to R. Thorpe and T. Persson, "historical thinking is a unique mental approach to historical education, aimed at the formation of students' ability to deeply analyze and correctly interpret historical events. It significantly increases the effectiveness of teaching by developing critical thinking skills necessary for understanding the complexities and subtleties of history [10].

Reyes Parra et al.: "Historical thinking is a creative process that includes cognitive skills that allow for the critical study of complex ideas and facts. It makes it easier for readers to understand human life from the past to the present through skills such as chronological ordering, historical analysis, and empathy" [8].

Through virtual museums, students not only acquire historical facts but also have the opportunity to consolidate their knowledge in a visual and communicative form. Furthermore, digital technologies allow for the presentation of historical content in an interactive and personalized manner [11].

T. Kersten and others, speaking about the virtual museum, note that "the virtual museum is an innovative tool that allows presenting objects of historical and cultural heritage in a digital environment, has great potential in the formation of historical thinking in students, and also allows studying the museum through immersive virtual reality, using 3D technologies for presenting various exhibitions, which contributes to a deeper understanding of complex historical contexts" [7].

The use of virtual museums allows students not only to get acquainted with museum exhibits but also to develop a culture of information consumption [2].

From the above definitions, it can be concluded that the following constitute important aspects of the development of historical thinking. These are: through the understanding of history, a sense of understanding the meaning of life is formed, and a sense of understanding that a person is a person; through historical thinking, the meaning of life is understood and the philosophy of the future is formed; the development of historical thinking provides an opportunity to form a perfect person who understands human identity, knows his dignity, and protects his rights and duties; historical thinking is inextricably linked with the awakening and formation of national

pride in a person; and the spiritual, moral, and ethical development of each person serves the development of society.

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, several research methods were used to analyze the role of virtual museums in the development of historical thinking in students and its influence on the educational process. These are the methods of theoretical analysis (comparative-critical study and analysis of scientific and methodological literature on research), sociometric (questionnaires, interviews), and pedagogical observation, etc.

The study also analyzed modern pedagogical approaches, the integration of digital technologies, and didactic opportunities for mastering historical knowledge.

## RESULTS

Virtual museums not only increase schoolchildren's interest in history but also contribute to their formation as digital citizens of the 21st century.

The education system faces various difficulties in the formation of historical thinking. These include insufficient knowledge of teachers and limited educational resources. This requires the development of innovative teaching methods and a review of traditional educational practice for the effective formation of historical thinking skills in students.

Virtual museums develop students' historical thinking through a number of specific mechanisms:

### 1. Open access to historical sources and their analysis.

While traditional museums have limited access to all exhibits, virtual museums open the way to endless sources. Thanks to this, it will be possible to get acquainted with digitized copies of original sources, such as ancient documents, letters, diaries, photos, and videos, on virtual platforms. By directly studying these sources, students develop skills in analyzing historical evidence, identifying context, and drawing conclusions. Virtual museums will also be enriched with archaeological finds, works of art, 3D models of historical sites, and audio stories. This helps students feel historical periods visually and aurally and process information in various formats. As noted by R. Atamuratov and P. Gaybullayeva, digital resources democratize access to cultural heritage and expand educational opportunities [3].

### 2. Reviving historical events and fostering empathy.

Virtual museums allow readers to experience historical events not just as a collection of facts, but as living processes. In this case, through virtual trips, students can travel to the ruins of ancient cities, historical battlefields, or virtual reconstructions of the culture of

ancient civilizations. This helps to understand historical processes and place events in a spatio-temporal context. Some virtual museums offer users interactive stories, such as playing historical figures, solving problem situations, or making decisions. This develops empathy in students, that is, the ability to understand the feelings and motivations of people in the past.

**3. Critical thinking and comparison of various hypotheses.** Virtual museums encourage students to approach information critically. In this process, students develop critical thinking skills by comparing exhibits from different virtual museums or different sections of the same museum, analyzing the purposes and context of their creation. For example, comparing what information is given about one historical event in museums of different countries, etc. Also, through forums or chats organized on virtual platforms, students learn to express their opinions on historical issues, engage in discussions with others, and respect different viewpoints. This forms a culture of argumentation and discussion based on evidence.

**4. Digital literacy and creativity.** The very use of virtual museums develops a number of digital skills in students. These include free movement on virtual platforms; finding and organizing information; using multimedia tools (viewing videos, listening to audio recordings, and viewing 3D models); and creating digital content (creating small virtual exhibits and presenting research results through digital presentations). It reinforces creativity and digital storytelling skills. [1]

## **DISCUSSION**

The formation of historical thinking, regardless of its object, can be carried out only on the basis of general laws of thinking, general methodological principles of cognition, and features of historical cognition.

Due to the subject content of history, its features are manifested, which requires a specific direction, sequence, harmony of thought processes, and the application of certain methodological ideas. For students to successfully master historical thinking, they must master a whole system of information and analytical skills. Usually, the teacher plans to teach one method of activity in a separate lesson. However, it is advisable to show students all the methods and the interrelationship of the actions they perform. Various active methods are widely used for this purpose: laboratory-practical classes, debates, forums, symposiums, debates, court hearings, creation of research projects, etc.

Virtual museums are not only cultural and educational institutions but also a collection of world art treasures that allow students to virtually view exhibitions of great

interest. Their role in the development of historical thinking in students is great. Because, unlike real museums, virtual museums can be visited by students independently without the help of a teacher. Therefore, this creates broad opportunities for them. This not only develops historical thinking but also serves as a basis for enriching the spiritual world of students.

Studying history through virtual museums leads to the development of historical thinking in students. The study of the cultural heritage of the past is considered a complex process. The introduction of examples of cultural heritage and the noble ideas put forward in them into the consciousness of the younger generation should be carried out continuously, consistently, systematically, and purposefully.

Thus, the development of historical thinking in students goes through a long and complex path from ignorance to knowledge, from inaction to activity, and from unconsciousness to consciousness. If its formation is integrated into the holistic educational process, taking into account the basic laws of psychology and pedagogy, positive results can be achieved. Until humanity learns to fully utilize the experience of past centuries for today's life, interest in the development of historical thinking will persist. A person who has forgotten history is condemned to repeat it.

## **CONCLUSION**

Virtual museums create invaluable opportunities for the development of historical thinking in students in modern education. They provide wide access to historical sources, bring historical events to life, encourage critical analysis and comparison of views, and also increase digital literacy and creativity. To maximize the use of this potential, the following scientific and methodological recommendations have been developed:

1. It is advisable to create high-quality virtual museums reflecting the rich historical and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan and to organize their use in the educational process.
2. It is necessary to systematically integrate the use of virtual museums into history textbooks and curricula, train schoolteachers in the effective use of virtual museum resources through modern didactic support, and provide them with practical methodological instructions.
3. It is necessary to make wider use of the capabilities of modern didactic resources of virtual museums and, on this basis, to develop problem-based learning, project work, and research assignments aimed at the

formation of historical thinking.

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