

# Analysis of Implementation of Historical Thinking Construct in Historical Learning

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## ABSTRACT

There are many methods, models, strategies, and media that have developed rapidly for learning in recent decades, but none of them have been able to make historical learning achieve its maximum objectives. In essence, history has a learning approach that rests on historical treasures itself, namely historical thinking, which includes; chronological thinking, causality thinking, interpretation, the three dimensions of time, and values. The purpose of this study is to analyze the implementation of historical thinking in history learning, especially in universities. The method used in this research is descriptive evaluative. The results showed that historical thinking has not been implemented optimally. This can be seen from the material design in the syllabus which emphasizes the chronology of events, the results of the questionnaire show that in general the lecturers have not trained students to historical thinking during lectures, and this finding is strengthened by the results of student interviews.

**Keywords:** *Historical Thinking, Historical Learning, Chronological Thinking*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

History is interpreting and understanding (Kuntowijoyo, 2008) [1]. To review the past in the present, history has a construction of thought that no other science has, historians call it 'historical thinking.' However, the construct of historical thought has not yet fully developed in the process of learning history in schools and even in universities. This then becomes a problem in learning history. There are still few teachers and lecturers who are able to train their students to think about history, so that history learning describes more facts, forgetting to take the meaning of every event.

In addition, seeing the current learning phenomenon, teachers tend to believe more in learning using media, learning tools, learning approaches and methods. The use of tools in the learning process further reduces the essence and purpose of education itself [2]. The fullness of historical material seems to be the main reason teachers focus on conveying material information in its entirety without being designed in a "rail" of historical thinking. So it is not surprising that the study of history is only a place to review the "past for the past". The biggest impact of the "failure" of this history learning is the weakness of the students' historical thinking constructs, which basically comes from the weakness of the teacher's thought construct.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the learning process in the History Department at Universitas Negeri Padang. This learning process includes courses on

Indonesian History, Thematic History, Regional History, and Historical Science. Then analyze the implementation of historical thought constructs in history learning. Whether the constructs of thought that are the basis of any historical analysis are carried out in the learning process or not. In addition, this study also aims to formulate the stages of historical thinking in any history learning material that specifically discusses events. So that it becomes one of the references for students or lecturers in managing and directing the learning process in the classroom.

This research is important to do, because if it is ignored and seen as if it were not a problem, then mistakes in learning history will be passed down from generation to generation. Of course the main impact of this neglect is that the quality of history learning becomes stagnant, even underdeveloped. History loses its meaning and function as "learning". From this research, it examines the problems in history learning, why do these problems occur? What are the obstacles in the application of historical thinking in each lecture? And what is the most appropriate solution to be applied in overcoming this problem?

Writing research themes on history and learning history is not new to the author. The importance of learning history in shaping the character of students, because learning history also learns to take good values from every event that can be applied in everyday life. As stated in the article *Optimizing the Role of Historical Learning in the Formation of National Character* which

was published in the Proceedings of the National Seminar and the APPS Congress [3]. Then interpreting historical events is also written in the article Analysis of the Meaning of Historical Learning through the Application of a Structured Model which is published in the Journal of Historia [4]. How to arrange history learning materials based on chronology is found in the Application Of Structuring Models In Analysis Of History Events presented at the 2nd International Conference on Social Sciences and Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, Padang State University (2018) [5]. In addition, the discussion about building the character of students by learning history is also outlined in the article Building Character Education With The History an Islamic Empires in Nusantara [6]. Furthermore, the use value of history as learning that shapes student character is also contained in the writing of Historical Literacy as an Effort to Build Character for Children [7]. Media development is carried out in history learning, especially comic media, which can be read in more detail in the article Innovation of History Learning through Comic [8].

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is an evaluative study. This means that the data collected is not just numbers, but also data derived from observations, analysis of documentation, interviews, and questionnaires. The use of this research method is based on the main objective of the study, namely to describe the situation comprehensively in the actual context related to the evaluation of historical learning in the History Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. The research method used is an evaluation method that uses a Goal Oriented Evaluation model to measure the implementation of historical thinking constructs in history learning.

According to Arikunto [9], the Goal-Oriented Evaluation model proposed by Tyler is an evaluation approach that determines the review of objectives since the beginning of the activity and takes place continuously. Tyler's evaluation approach procedures are as follows: 1) Formulation of objectives to be measured, 2) Selection of instruments, 3) Selection of evaluation designs, 4) Data collection and analysis, 5) Interpretation of results.

## 3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In essence, history learning has three main objectives, namely academic skills or abilities, historical awareness, and nationalism. Academic skills to practice thinking skills, especially historical thinking. Ma'mur states that historical thinking skills are abilities that must be developed so that students can distinguish between the

past, present, and future [10]. Adele Nye, examined students' responses about the relationship between certain events and historical thinking. There are at least three things that concern him; First, most students use secondary sources of each event in analyzing historical thinking; Second, students explain some of the relationships between things online and historical thinking; and Third, there are several differences seen from the responses of elementary school students and upper level students [11]. These findings underscore the need to reform historical thinking and communicate it in an appropriate way.

Mestika Zed also discusses the essence of historical thinking in the basic concept which is given the term "The Five C's". The five concepts are an integral part of the basic concepts of historical thought, including; *Change over time, Causality, Context, Complexity, Contingency* [12]. Historical thinking skills are a systematic step that must be taken to solve problems as the goal of learning history [13]. Seixas dan Peck, stated "*historical thinking: historical cognition as specified by as the process by which students employ procedural knowledge and disciplined inquiry*" [14]. Then Wineburg states, 'historical thinking demands that we reconcile two opposing views; first, the way of thinking that we use today is an inheritance that cannot be removed, and second, if we do not try to eliminate that inheritance, we inevitably have to use "presentism", which is seeing the past with the lens of the present [15]. In essence, Wineburg firmly states that there is a continuity of the past that shapes the present, as well as changes in the elements, values and social order as a form of reinterpretation of changing times.

Every change occurs in time. Human life is always controlled by time. Human existence in the world always has a beginning and an end. It is in the period between the beginning and the end of their existence that humans live their lives historically. In that history there is a dialectical process between change and sustainability [16]. He also emphasized, "the concept of change is a paradoxical concept." Change basically combines the notion of difference and something that remains the same. Bringing the two together will increase awareness of time, and presenting it in historical learning will be a reflection of our future actions.

Conceptually, historical thinking is the ability to analysis past events with a present framework. From the accumulated opinions of historians on historical thinking, five components of historical thought are formulated that can be applied in historical learning. The five components of historical thought are chronological thinking, causality thinking, interpretation, three dimensions of time, and exploration of the value or meaning of historical events. All components of

historical thought are arranged in a structured and hierarchical manner in their application in historical learning that discusses events.

### 1. Syllabus Analysis

Syllabus analysis is carried out to see whether the implementation of historical thinking is included in the syllabus. This analysis is important, considering that the syllabus is the main guideline in formulating the material presented or studied by students during learning at each meeting. Syllabus analysis based on historical thinking is illustrated in the graph below.

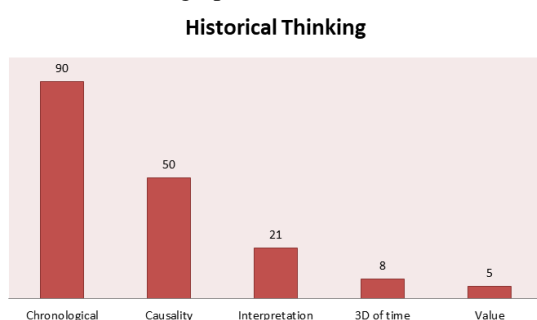


Figure 1: Percentage of historical thinking on the syllabus

In a history course, conceptual historical thinking must be taught there, but it has not been properly applied. A discussion of new historical thinking appears to be covered in the course Introduction to History. However, it hasn't been seen in the others.

Chronological thinking dominates the syllabus. Almost all courses contain a chronology, starting from describing conceptual understanding to describing the events of each learning meeting according to the time. Only half of the thoughts on causality are included in the syllabus, it turns out that not all events discussed by students are directed to analysis the causes and effects of these events, there are even courses that do not contain causality at all. Interpretation of events is very minimal in the syllabus, especially when compared to three-dimensional thinking of time and the values contained in historical events. In particular, the values of history only conceptually discussed in scientific history, and no other subjects on which it appears in the syllabus.

### 2. Questionnaire

The distribution of questionnaires was carried out to further analyze the application of historical thinking in history learning. The questionnaire was given via google form to students majoring in history class 2017, 2018, and 2019. Taking student respondents was not without reason, because students in that class are currently actively attending lectures in the Department of History.

Students above it are no longer active in lectures, most of them are in the process of drafting their thesis. Then the 2020 class was not included in the respondents, because they had just attended lectures in the History Department, so they had no experience.

The research questionnaire contains nineteen items of questions that must be answered by respondents. The main thing that was asked was their knowledge of historical thinking, the application of historical thinking in lectures, and the ability of lecturers to invite or train students in historical thinking. The range of mean scores and categories used are Range of Average Score [17].

Eighty-five students responded to the questionnaires. From the questionnaire analysis, it was obtained that the average data was 3.19, including in the good category. The general meaning is that the implementation of historical thinking in history learning has gone well, although it has not yet reached the maximum category. Then from the assessments given to the questionnaire by students, they were more dominant in filling in the answers at the 'often' and 'know' stages, and only a few were in the 'always' and 'very knowing' categories, some were even filled in the 'don't know' and 'never'. Further analysis of the description of the results of the questionnaire was carried out based on the grid, then the following data were obtained.

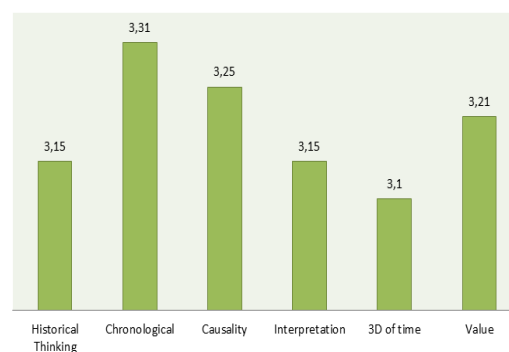


Figure 2. The results of the questionnaire analysis are based on the Historical Thinking grid.

From the table above, it is illustrated that only one item falls into the maximum (very good) category, namely chronological. This is also in line with the results of the syllabus review of all subjects that have applied chronological thinking in history learning. However, this also shows that historical studies are still focused on describing the years of events or the sequence of events. Especially if you analyze items that fall into the lowest category from the results of the questionnaire analysis, namely thinking three dimensions of time. This means that history learning has not been fully utilized to analyze

current phenomena and what will happen in the future based on past events.

### 3. Interview

Interviews were conducted not only to gather more information but also to cross check the data to make it more valid. The results of interviews with history students can be concluded as follows;

- a. Students know the term historical thinking, but have not been able to explain its meaning and application in history learning.
- b. The implementation of history learning is still in the stage of reviewing the chronology of an event. Even lecturers tend to let students discuss about, man, space, and time, even though some ask questions about the cause or effect of an event, but still about things written in books or texts.
- c. When explaining the conclusions about the learning material, the lecturer has not fully invited students to make interpretations, relates the events discussed with events that are happening now, and draws "red threads" from these events. Although, there have been several lecturers who have done it, especially Indonesian History lecturers.
- d. Most of the lecturers have not yet carried out the values or meaning of an event, either in the course of Indonesian History, Thematic, Regional and Historical Studies. Even though there have been one or two lecturers who did it in the meeting.
- e. The tasks given by lecturers to students are generally still about making a resume, or concept. Although there are already one or two lecturers who give assignments with questions based on historical thinking.

The findings are almost the same between syllabus analysis data, questionnaire results, and interviews about the application of historical thinking in history learning in the History Department. So it can be concluded that historical thinking which is a characteristic of history has not been implemented optimally. Historical learning is still focused on reviewing past events, and dry interpretation of life today and in the future.

### CONCLUSIONS

History has its own approach in teaching it, namely Historical Thinking, including; chronological thinking, causality thinking, interpretation, three-dimensional thinking, and values. In the analysis of the syllabus which includes Historical Science, Indonesian History, Regional History, and Thematic History, it does not cover all aspects of historical thought. From the results of the questionnaire analysis that was distributed to students, it was obtained data that all stages of historical thinking had implications for learning history,

although it was not optimal for all aspects of historical thinking. Finally, the results of interviews with students of the Department of History corroborate research findings on syllabus analysis and also questionnaires. Historical thinking which characterizes history is not yet optimal. Historical learning is still focused on reviewing past events, and dry interpretation of life today and in the future.

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