

# Measures To Develop Multidimensional Thinking For Students In Teaching History At High Schools

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## **Abstract**

*In teaching History at high schools, fixed thinking and passive modes of knowledge reception remain factors that hinder the formation of students' historical thinking competence. This article focuses on clarifying the concept of multidimensional thinking, analyzing the significance of developing multidimensional thinking for students, and proposing several pedagogical measures to enable students to perceive history from multiple perspectives, levels, and modes of thinking. On that basis, the article emphasizes such measures as interdisciplinary teaching, situation creation, the use of historical materials, and the construction of learning diagrams in order to promote students' active cognition, as well as their abilities of analysis, comparison, synthesis, and logical thinking. The research findings indicate that the development of multidimensional thinking not only contributes to improving the effectiveness of learning History but also creates conditions for fostering profound, flexible, and comprehensive historical cognition among high school students.*

**Key Word:** *Multidimensional thinking, history teaching, high school students, thinking development, historical thinking competence.*

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## **I. Introduction**

Thinking is an essential tool for students' learning of History. However, in traditional history education, some teachers have overlooked students' role as active subjects and have confined instruction to textbook-based transmission. In such a context, students lack opportunities to think independently and can only passively receive historical conclusions. As a result, they not only encounter difficulties in understanding historical knowledge, but also tend to develop fixed patterns of thinking, which adversely affect the development of their thinking competence. In classroom teaching of History at the high school level, teachers therefore need to reform traditional teaching methods, provide students with opportunities for multidimensional thinking, and enable them to develop such thinking through direct learning practice. Multidimensional thinking refers to a mode of thinking in which the thinking subject constructs understanding from multiple perspectives, at multiple levels, and in a comprehensive manner based on the actual characteristics of the object of cognition. Fostering multidimensional thinking in History classrooms can provide students with opportunities to think, analyze, and solve problems from different perspectives, thereby building a sound foundation for historical cognition. In the process of cultivating multidimensional thinking among students, teachers may apply the following strategies.

## **II. Research Methods**

The article employs a combination of theoretical research methods, including analysis, synthesis, systematization, and generalization of documents, in order to clarify the concept of multidimensional thinking, examine the significance of developing multidimensional thinking for students in History teaching, and propose appropriate pedagogical measures. In addition, the method of analyzing the content of History teaching at the high school level is also applied to formulate measures that are consistent with the requirements of the subject, thereby ensuring the scientific rigor and practical feasibility of the study.

## **III. Result**

### ***The Concept of Multidimensional Thinking***

Thinking is a higher-order cognitive process in which the subject mobilizes intellectual operations such as reasoning, generalization, association, simulation, and evaluation in order to construct an understanding of an object that goes beyond directly available data (Markman & Gentner, 2001) [1]. The development of multidimensional thinking is a purposeful pedagogical process aimed at broadening and enhancing learners' capacity to approach, analyze, and solve problems from multiple perspectives, at multiple levels, and through different modes of thinking. Through this process, learners develop the ability to shift flexibly among cognitive strategies and to combine analysis, comparison, synthesis, critical reflection, and creativity in order to construct a comprehensive understanding of the object of cognition.

In the teaching of History, developing students' multidimensional thinking is the process by which teachers organize content, tasks, and the learning environment so that students can mobilize a variety of ways of thinking in their understanding of the past. It enables students to examine events within their contexts, compare multiple viewpoints, use historical evidence, analyze causal relationships and consequences, engage in comparison and critical reflection, and construct evidence-based interpretations. In this way, students gradually develop profound, flexible, and comprehensive historical cognition.

### ***The Significance of Developing Multidimensional Thinking for Students in History Teaching***

Developing multidimensional thinking for students in History teaching is of great significance in terms of cognition, competence development, and educational effectiveness. First, it helps overcome passive learning, rote memorization, and fixed patterns of thinking that still persist in traditional History teaching, thereby creating conditions for students to become active agents in the process of historical cognition. When students approach historical events, phenomena, and figures from multiple perspectives, at multiple levels, and within different relationships, they are given opportunities to think more deeply, understand the true nature of historical issues, and build a solid foundation for historical understanding.

In addition, the development of multidimensional thinking helps students cultivate the abilities to analyze, compare, synthesize, make connections, and solve historical problems in a flexible manner. This process not only supports students in grasping knowledge comprehensively, but also promotes convergence, connection, and coherence among different domains of knowledge, especially in the context of competency-based History teaching. Through activities such as interdisciplinary teaching, situation creation, the use of historical sources, and the construction of historical diagrams, students gradually develop logical thinking, visual thinking, critical thinking, and the capacity for evidence-based historical interpretation.

More broadly, the development of multidimensional thinking also contributes to improving the quality and effectiveness of learning in History. When students are encouraged to think actively, to explore, and to construct knowledge through multiple pathways, their learning interest is enhanced, and their ability to retain and apply knowledge becomes more sustainable. Therefore, developing multidimensional thinking is not only a requirement for the renewal of History teaching methods, but also a meaningful orientation for fostering historical thinking competence, cultivating intellectual qualities, and improving the quality of education at the high school level.

### ***Measures for Developing Multidimensional Thinking in Students through History Teaching***

#### ***Interdisciplinary Teaching: Learning History from Multiple Perspectives***

Interdisciplinary teaching and learning history from multiple perspectives constitute a process of purposeful integration between historical knowledge and knowledge from related fields, thereby enabling students to approach the past in its multidimensionality, interconnectedness, and multiple aspects. Through this process, students' historical thinking and multidimensional thinking can be effectively developed. When engaging in interdisciplinary learning experiences, students are able to break away from fixed patterns of thought, make associations with the content of different subjects, solve problems, and achieve convergence and coherence across disciplinary knowledge, thereby enhancing their cognitive capacity. Therefore, teachers need to identify the connections between History and other subjects and, based on the content of history instruction, employ appropriate methods to implement interdisciplinary teaching.

For example, when teaching Theme 5, "Lesson 10: The Reform of Lê Thánh Tông (15th Century)" (History 11 - Connecting Knowledge to Life) [3], one of the important knowledge contents of this lesson is the prosperity of the Lê Sơ dynasty, especially after the reforms introduced by King Lê Thánh Tông. As is widely recognized, under the Lê Sơ dynasty, there were many renowned literary works such as "Quân trung từ mệnh tập", "Bình Ngô đại cáo", "Phủ biên tạp lục", "Văn đài loại ngữ", "Quần thư khảo biện", and "Toàn việt thi lục", all of which reflected the society of a flourishing period in Vietnamese history. During the fifteenth-century Lê Sơ period, politics was stable, while the economy and culture were remarkably prosperous. Folk poetry and ca dao praised this peaceful and prosperous era in the following lines: "Đời Lê Thái Tổ, Thái Tông/Thóc lúa đầy đồng gà chẳng thềm ăn". The Lê Sơ period was also an era of urban prosperity, during which handicrafts flourished and led to the formation of craft guilds in old Thăng Long. In folk tradition, this was expressed through the well-known ca dao: "Rủ nhau chơi khắp Long Thành/Ba mươi sáu phố rành rành chẳng sai".

When participating in Literature learning activities, students repeatedly read these works, poems, and ca dao, and thereby may come to understand the developmental conditions of the Lê Sơ dynasty. Based on this, in classroom teaching, teachers may organize the instructional content chronologically and read the poems and ca dao expressively. In the process of listening, students are encouraged to think actively, transfer their understanding from Literature, and relate it to authentic "hoàn cảnh lịch sử". In such a context, students can analyze the social situation from a literary perspective. Subsequently, the teacher raises historical questions such

as: Why did prosperity emerge during the Lê Sơ period? What results and significance did the reforms of Lê Thánh Tông bring about? Under the stimulus of these questions, students will seek answers from both literary and historical perspectives. Based on students' problem-solving process, the teacher may then supplement the relevant knowledge content.

In this way, students are not only able to think about and solve problems from multiple perspectives, thereby constructing sound historical understanding, but also able to achieve convergence and coherence of knowledge, draw lessons from their inquiry, and gradually build a more complete knowledge system. At the same time, many students will develop multidimensional thinking and enhance their overall thinking capacity.

#### *Creating Situations and Presenting History in a Multidimensional Manner*

Creating situations and presenting history in a multidimensional manner is the process by which teachers design problem-based learning environments and reconstruct historical contexts through appropriate means, thereby enabling students to observe, analyze, and interpret history from multiple perspectives. Through this process, students gradually develop comprehensive and flexible historical understanding. Effective situation creation can foster positive emotions in students, stimulate active thinking, deepen their sense of historical experience, strengthen their historical cognition, and at the same time promote the development of multidimensional thinking. Therefore, in History teaching, teachers should selectively employ videos, images, and other instructional media to create situations and present history in a multidimensional way.

For example, when teaching Theme 1, "Lesson 1: Some General Issues Concerning Bourgeois Revolutions," section "1. Preconditions for Bourgeois Revolutions" (History 11 - Connecting Knowledge to Life), teachers may, depending on learning conditions and students' actual learning situation, present videos or images of factories from that period to reconstruct production processes or the lives of workers. They may also create visual simulations of how machinery operated and what the working environment in factories looked like. At the same time, teachers may raise questions such as: How did the English bourgeois revolution promote changes in the modes of production and the distribution of goods? How did the development of industry and agriculture in Europe and the Americas create conditions for bourgeois revolutions? In what ways did the characteristics of the English economy before the revolution differ from those of France and the thirteen British colonies in North America?

Stimulated by such questions, students are encouraged to think actively and, in combination with textbook study and their prior knowledge, engage in learning situations that require resolution. Teachers may organize group discussions in which students propose analytical views on causes, formulate arguments, and work toward answering the learning questions, after which they present their findings before the class. While students are presenting, teachers need to listen carefully and provide purposeful supplementation where necessary.

Such a teaching approach not only enables students to broaden their thinking, transfer prior knowledge, think multidirectionally, and solve problems, but also deepens their understanding of historical content. More importantly, it helps students naturally accumulate experience in thinking and thereby develop multidimensional thinking.

#### *Presenting Historical Sources and Conducting Multilayered Analysis*

Presenting historical sources and conducting multilayered analysis is the process by which teachers organize students' engagement with historical sources through multi-level analytical methods in order to identify the diversity of historical interpretations, construct evidence-based arguments, and develop historical thinking in a multidimensional direction. Owing to differences across historical periods, people's ways of thinking about and interpreting history are not identical. This demonstrates the inherent diversity of history. Therefore, in learning History, students need to analyze and distinguish differing viewpoints in historical sources from multiple perspectives so as to construct profound historical understanding. In History teaching at the high school level, teachers may draw on the instructional content to present relevant sources and guide students in carrying out multilayered analysis.

For example, when teaching Theme 4, "Lesson 8: Several Uprisings and Wars of National Liberation in Vietnamese History (From the 3rd Century BCE to the End of the 19th Century)," section "2. The Lam Son Uprising (1418 - 1427)" (History 11 - Connecting Knowledge to Life), in discussing the victory of this uprising, it is impossible not to mention the exceptionally significant contributions of Nguyễn Trãi in addition to the leadership role of Lê Lợi. Accordingly, in the teaching process, the teacher may focus on evaluating the role of Nguyễn Trãi and select relevant sources for students' analysis. Lê Thánh Tông, the enlightened monarch, praised Nguyễn Trãi in the verse: "Ức Trai tâm thượng quang Khuê tảo" (Ức Trai lòng dạ sáng sao Khuê). King Lê Nhân Tông commented on Nguyễn Trãi as follows: Nguyễn Trãi was a loyal subject who helped Đức Thái Tổ suppress disorder and assisted Đức Thái Tông in restoring an age of peace and stability. In both literary accomplishment and moral virtue, none of the distinguished officials of the dynasty could equal

him. In “Kiến văn tiêu lục”, Lê Quý Đôn wrote of Nguyễn Trãi that he was “...ranked foremost in his age; his office was Thượng thư, and his status was that of a meritorious official. One need only consider how he served the politics of two reigns with utmost loyalty, offering remonstrance wholeheartedly, often being oppressed yet never yielding.” Ngô Thời Sĩ also remarked on Nguyễn Trãi: “At the end of the Trần period, among the men of letters, Nguyễn Úc Trai was a figure of the highest distinction”. Ngô Thế Vinh similarly observed: “The merits of Úc Trai tiên sinh endure with the Lô River and Tản Mountain”. Nguyễn Trãi was even regarded as the archetypal figure echoed in Shakespeare’s praise in Hamlet: “Here stands a man, a man complete in all respects / Never have I seen his equal” [2].

Based on this body of source material, the teacher may assign students such tasks as: What role did Nguyễn Trãi play in assisting vua Lê Thái Tổ in suppressing disorder and vua Lê Thái Tông in consolidating an era of peace? How should Nguyễn Trãi’s literary talent be evaluated? How may Nguyễn Trãi be compared with other historical figures? What was Nguyễn Trãi’s influence on Vietnamese culture and history? Under the stimulus of such tasks, students develop their thinking, identify key information, and arrive at meaningful discoveries. In this way, students not only substantiate the content of the sources but also gain a comprehensive understanding of the historical figure and a deeper grasp of the historical event. Through comparison, analysis, and synthesis, they genuinely cultivate multidimensional thinking competence, particularly dialectical thinking and critical thinking.

#### *Drawing Diagrams and Organizing History through Multiple Modes*

Drawing diagrams and organizing history through multiple modes is an instructional approach in which teachers guide students to systematize historical knowledge by means of diagrams, tables, timelines, or other visual forms in order to clarify the relationships among events, historical figures, and historical processes. Through this approach, students are able to structure their cognition and develop multidimensional thinking. For example, in the process of drawing historical diagrams, students transfer their prior historical understanding, activate dialectical thinking, analyze historical content, clarify historical relationships, refine their historical cognition, and construct a coherent knowledge structure. At the same time, through diagrammatic representation of history, students can further enhance their level of logical thinking. Therefore, in teaching practice, teachers need to take into account students’ actual learning conditions and guide them in drawing diagrams appropriately.

For example, when teaching Theme 4, Lesson 7, “An Overview of Wars to Defend the Nation in Vietnamese History,” section “2. Several Typical Victorious Resistance Wars” (History 11 - Connecting Knowledge to Life), after students have completed this content, the teacher may assign the following task: discuss the content that has been learned, arrange the historical events systematically, and draw a diagram presenting the main content of the three resistance wars against the Mông - Nguyên forces (1258 - 1288). The teacher then guides students in identifying the major events, the chronology, and the relevant historical figures.

First, the teacher guides students in discussing key events such as the resistance war of 1258: drawing the opening part of the diagram with the event of the Mongol invasion of Đại Việt and the Trần dynasty’s counterattack at Bình Lệ Nguyên (Vĩnh Phúc). For the resistance war of 1285, students add to the diagram the struggle against the 500,000 Nguyên troops commanded by Thoát Hoan, including the battles at Thăng Long, Chương Dương, and Vạn Kiếp, as well as the retreat of the Nguyên army. For the resistance war of 1287 - 1288, students mark the renewed Nguyên attack on Đại Việt and the famous battle on the Bạch Đằng River, where the Đại Việt forces destroyed the invading army.

Step 2: Drawing a chronological diagram.

Students use a timeline to illustrate the progression of events, marking important points in time such as 1258, 1285, and 1287 - 1288.

Step 3: Discussing military strategies and outcomes.

For each event, students discuss the strategies employed by the Đại Việt forces and the outcomes of each resistance war against the Mông - Nguyên forces.

Step 4: Integrating information into the diagram.

Each group of events in the resistance wars is represented as one section of the diagram, linked by arrows indicating the historical process and the course of the wars.

Step 5: Adding annotations and explanations.

Each section of the diagram should include brief annotations explaining each event and its outcome.

Step 6: Comparing and contrasting.

Students are encouraged to compare and contrast the three resistance wars in order to identify the development of military organization and strategy among the Đại Việt army and people.

Step 7: Discussion and synthesis.

Once the diagram has been completed, the teacher discusses with students the historical significance of these victories for the defense of the country's sovereignty and independence.

Stimulated by the learning task, students think actively, relate to the content they have learned, and, through diagram drawing, visually represent the connections among different domains of knowledge, thereby forming a structured cognitive framework. At the same time, with the support of the diagram, some students are able to identify and supplement gaps in their understanding and further refine their historical cognition. Thus, students not only gain a profound understanding of historical content, but also cultivate logical thinking competence and translate visual thinking into effective learning practice.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Developing multidimensional thinking for students in History teaching at the high school level is of considerable significance in the context of educational reform oriented toward the development of qualities and competencies. Organizing learning in such a way that students approach historical knowledge from multiple perspectives, at multiple levels, and through different modes not only helps overcome passive learning and fixed patterns of thinking, but also creates favorable conditions for students to form profound, flexible, and well-grounded historical cognition. On this basis, such measures as interdisciplinary teaching, situation creation, the use of historical sources, and the drawing of learning diagrams have demonstrated their potential to encourage students to think proactively and to analyze, compare, synthesize, and interpret historical issues in a multidimensional manner. This is not only a pathway to improving the quality of students' acquisition of historical knowledge, but also a means of fostering logical thinking, critical thinking, dialectical thinking, and active learning competence. Therefore, the development of multidimensional thinking for students should be regarded as an important requirement in the teaching of History at high schools.

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