



Students' Perceptions Concerning the Site Visit in History, ICSS, Malaysia

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Abstract

The study is essentially an exploratory survey, which sets out to obtain some concrete information on the students' perception concerning the site visit in the teaching and learning of history, Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (ICSS) Malaysia. The researcher employed the 'convenience sampling' method and selected two states in Malaysia, namely Perak and Terengganu, involving four hundred students from each state. The data was collected through distribution of questionnaire and interviews. The findings of the questionnaire reveal that the score in Perak was higher than Terengganu, boys score higher than girls, Form Four score the highest among the level of education, and, interestingly, both science and religious have the same number of responses in the type of schools categories. As an addition, it was discovered from interviews that site visits allow for student-centred learning, giving students the chance to improve their own skills in using concrete evidence and developing essential historical skills. At the same time it enables students to develop truly cross-curricular skills of various subjects including mathematics and science. It is hoped that the study would raise concern, awareness and benefit to all involved in the teaching and learning of history in the ICSS Malaysia, and school students across the world in this era of globalization.

Keywords: students' perceptions – site visits - advantages

Introduction

The history fieldwork was introduced into the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (ICSS) Malaysia in 1988 and reviewed in 2000 and 2008. This approach is compulsory for all students of lower secondary level namely, Forms One, Form Two and Form Three. The aim of introducing this method is to expose students, in accordance with their age level, to the history of the nearest locality, a much smaller area than a district, state or country. The emphasis of the ICSS history fieldwork is on the orientation and understandings of the community and environment of Malaysia. It is designed to enable students to have knowledge, understand, have an interest in, and sensitive towards human beings and their environment as stipulated in the Policy of National Development, Philosophy of National Education, Philosophy of History Education, Malaysia (Ministry of Education, Malaysia 1988, 2000, 2008). Interestingly, the Ministry of Education Malaysia had announced that history would be included as one of the compulsory subjects to be taught at primary school beginning year 2011. The teaching and learning methods of history at this level will also involve fieldwork approaches (Ministry of Education Malaysia 2010).

Literature Review

The teaching and learning of fieldwork involved various methods includes lecture, group work, story-telling, role-play, video, text-book, computer assisted learning, and, site visit. These approaches and techniques are strongly encouraged to be used by teachers in the teaching and learning of history, ICSS Malaysia in all level of education from primary and secondary (MohamadJohdi 2000).

The aims of ICSS, formulated by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) Ministry of Education (1988, 2000, 2008), significant to the teaching and learning of fieldwork methods in history:

- i. to develop and enhance students' intellectual capacity with respect to rational, critical and creative thinking;
- ii. to acquire knowledge, develop a mastery of skills and be able to use them in daily life;
- iii. to develop their abilities and faculties for the betterment of themselves and society;

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- iv. to develop the confidence and the resilience to face challenges in life;
- v. to understand, be aware of and appreciate the history as well as the socio-cultural milieu of the country;
- vi. to be sensitive to, concerned about and appreciative of the environment and its aesthetic value; and
- vii. to be able to develop skills to cope with new areas of knowledge and development in technology.

The ICSS in general aims to provide students with total school experience which includes the learning processes inside and outside the classroom. The foremost feature in the ICSS is the use of holistic approach which entails integrating: first, knowledge, skills and values; second, theory and practice; and finally, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and the school culture (Ministry of Education, 2008).

The teaching and learning of fieldwork is focussed on the study of a particular geographical area and anything that is relevant in a student's environment. Black and MacRaid (1997) say that the emphasis is shifted from the singular nation to the plural region. The greatest appeal of this definition lies in its quality of sites which relevant to history curriculum.

As a foundation to site visit in history, students should be given sufficient exposure and guidance concerning the 'nature' of fieldwork approaches to history. This accords with the findings of Andreotti (1993), Watts (1993), and, Southgate (1997) who realised that by using artefacts discovered on sites as a stimulus it is possible to elicit and extend children's understanding of the historical concepts of change, chronology, and cause and effect. As Wood and Holden (1997) admitted that the study of artefacts in history fieldwork involves active learning and direct experience. This would provide opportunities to the children to discuss their ideas and make connections with their prior knowledge and experience in the quest for historical understanding. Infact, this should be followed by the teacher correcting misconceptions, extending children's learning through the input of new knowledge, and helping them to make connections with other disciplines and prior experience. This is because that successful teaching and learning depends on appropriate teaching methods which take into account the nature of progression in children's understanding (Wood & Holden, 1997; Cohen, Manion&Morrisson, 1996; White, 1994; Brooks, & Perry, 1993; Dickinson, 1992).

Hence, the role and function of site visit in the study of history are to contribute to the development of information collecting and handling skills; to make students aware that the visible remains of the past around us are as important a resource for our understanding of history as written documents; to equip students with the knowledge, skills and techniques which will enable students identify those remains, study and interpret them and place them in their wider historical context; to help students to reconstruct the lives of the people associated with a site at particular periods in the past; to stimulate interest and facilitate the study of a site and history as a whole; to contribute to the development of 'artistic' responses and cross curricular activities; to provide the basic experience for environmental studies, who considered essential because it encourages observation, presentation of material and comparison; to create in students an interest in the historical exploration of their environment which will continue as a leisure pursuit beyond school (Hannam 1970, Padley 1970, Cook 1970, Salt 1970, Roots 1970, SCHP 1976, SCHP 1982, Peplow 1978, CDC 1988, Anderson and Moore 1994).

From the role and function mentioned above, it would seem that in site visit the educative process of history is transferred from the classroom to the world of reality within the student's world of reality. Accordingly, fieldwork should be used as a stimulus for all kinds of educational work outside the classroom. A successful piece of fieldwork should stimulate children to make further inquiries with the minimum of encouragement. The teacher becomes a guide and active participator rather than an academic tutor (Cook 1970). Thus, a possible of passivity can be translated into activity on the part of the students themselves, such an attitude clearly fitting in Malaysia with the profound changes that have certainly taken place in attitudes towards history teaching as inspired or hoped for the History Unit CDC.

Archer (1985) clarifies that study of site visit in history should involve 'field work' rather than 'field teaching'. He defined 'field teaching' as the teacher who describes and explains, poses and answers questions and stimulates discussion. By 'field work', on the other hand, he refers to student who play a much more active role examining, describing and explaining the historical features of the site studied or visited. Archer (1985:49) explains that the involvement, participation and contribution of student in the fieldwork study is best described as follow:

Fieldwork is to be seen essentially as one of the means whereby pupils can use the physical, visible remains of the past, in conjunction with other source material, in class and in situ to construct an account of the thoughts and actions of people in the past. Such activity may take place in the area immediately adjacent to the school or much farther afield.

In fact, this is in line with Watts and Grosvenor (1995) suggestion that students are entitled to learning experiences which allow them to demonstrate their progress in knowledge and understanding of history, ability to give historical explanation, ability to investigate and work with historical sources of different kinds, ability to provide interpretation of the past are consistent with the evidence, ability to locate, select and organise historical information, ability to present findings appropriately and effectively give historical explanations, sense of the past, awareness of how the past helped to fashion the present, enthusiasm for exploring the past, respect for evidence, toleration of a range of opinions, and, construction approach to collaborative working. This shows that site visit gives considerable opportunity to students to be more independent in their study, acquired more historical information, develop thinking creativity, encourage interest in learning history, and, to become more self-confident.

Moreover, a site visit approaches to history is in accordance with the theory of Jean Piaget (1958) which concerns the development of logical, interrelated systems or thinking patterns known as 'operations'. The theory focuses on the creation of logical, deductive thinking in children and their habit to develop the capacity to think in abstract terms, to pose hypotheses and to reach conclusions. The child's action and environment function as fundamental importance in his or her emotional and intellectual development. This aptitude may appear in the formal operational stage at 11 or 12 years of age i. e. Form One.

With regard to the above, it is necessary to concentrate this study, especially on the introduction of history fieldwork as a compulsory coursework in the ICSS history curriculum and to examine and observe its development at its various stages of implementation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the students' perceptions concerning the site visits methods in history, ICSS, Malaysia. More specifically, the research intends to answer questions as follows:

1. What are the students' perceptions of site visit in history, ICSS Malaysia?
2. How are the students' perceptions of site visits in history based on different background including states, gender, types of school, level of education and, ethnicity?
3. What are the advantages the students would acquire from the site visit in history, ICSS Malaysia?

In fact, these questions are considered as 'guiding hypotheses' with the aim of surveying students' perceptions on the ICSS site visit technique in history.

Methodology of the Study

The researcher identified that the population of this study are students of Malaysian Lower Secondary Schools involved in the ICSS. The source of information for determining the population and permission to conduct this research were obtained from the Education, Planning and Research Development (EPRD), Ministry of Education Malaysia, the State Education Departments of Perak and Terengganu, and, the principals of respective schools.

The selection of respondents in this survey were based on the 'convenience' and 'stratified-random sampling' that involved 400 students from Lower Perak District of Perak and 400 students from Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, Malaysia. The sample population involved in the survey was stratified according to district, type of schools, levels of education, gender and ethnic groups. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to the respondents with the help of senior assistants and classroom teachers.

Every questionnaire was verified by the researcher to ensure that all items were responded appropriately. The data collected were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 17). For content validity, the researcher sought assistance and guidance from lecturers of the Birmingham University School of Education, lecturers and colleagues of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) Institute of Education (INSTED). The questionnaire was pilot-tested upon fifty sample students to attain reliability (Cohen and Manion 1994, Creswell 2008) and it was proved as reliable. The results of this study are displayed according to the number of responses and percentage (Best and Kahn, 1990; Coolican, 1996; and Wiersma, 2005).

As an addition, the researcher conducted an average of thirty-minute face to face group interview with forty respondents. The respondents were selected by employing convenience sampling assisted by the classroom teachers with prior permission from the school principals. The principals, teachers and students were very supportive and helpful. The interviewees were asked the standard closed and semi-structured questions which had been pilot-tested.

The answers given by interviewees were followed up by relevant, provocative questions with the aim of examining their knowledge and understanding of certain issues (Babbie, 1977; Wiersma, 2008). Every answer was referred to the checklist held by the researcher to ease the flow of the interview. The interviews were tape-recorded with prior permission from the interviewees and granted informed consent from the classroom teachers and principals. All information acquired from the interview were treated with high confidentiality and used for this research purposes only. The researcher discovered that their statements or arguments were based on the topics they have experienced in history fieldwork either individually, in a group or a class visit. This could be the reason that some of the students use the plural pronouns, especially 'we' in their conversations. The presentations of the findings were mainly based on the interviewees' verbal answers and not so much on their non-verbal communication. Hence, only answers significant to the research questions were selected and included in the discussions. Some of the common answers by the students were scrutinised and presented in one quotation, sentence or item. The background and distribution of students as respondents are shown in the following sections.

Description of Samples: Students' Background

The survey was conducted in two districts; namely the Hilir Perak District of Perak and Kuala Terengganu District of Terengganu. These districts were selected from the states because they have the criteria required by this research, especially the type of schools, student, and, location. The respondents involved in this research were 400 students (50.0%) from each state.

There were three types of schools involved in the survey, namely 'regular' (n=520 or 65%), 'science' (n=140 or 17.5%) and 'religious' (n=140 or 17.5%) schools. The main sample of this research were lower secondary school students, comprising Forms One, Two and Three, with 240 (30.0%) students each respectively. The researcher also have included selected Form Four students (n=80 or 10%) who had experienced history fieldwork teaching and learning in Form Three. The reason was to compliment the finding of this research. The researcher selected and distributed the questionnaires to the same number of boys (n=400 or 50%) and girls (n=400 or 50%).

The phenomenon of the three major ethnic groups in Malaysia resembled the proportion of ethnicity involved in this study with a major participation of Malays then the Chinese followed by the Indians. The distribution is the Malays (n=528 or 66.0%), Chinese (n=168 or 21.0%), and Indians (n=104 or 13%).

The following sections will present the findings and results of this study based on the research questions.

Analysis of Findings

In measuring the students' perceptions on the research questions, the researcher uses two survey methods, namely the questionnaire and the interview. The analysis was classified into two sections. First question, presents the responses in general, and second question, shows the responses based on different backgrounds namely the 'state', 'type of schools', 'level of education', 'gender' and 'ethnic groups'. The following section presents the result.

Question 1: What are the students' perceptions of site visit in history, ICSS Malaysia?

The students were asked to choose only the most interesting fieldwork methods from the nine choices listed in the questionnaire.

The distribution of responses in general is shown in table 1 below:

Table 1

Students' perceptions concerning the fieldwork methods in relation to learning and teaching of history

No.	Methods	Total Responses(Percentage) (N=800)
1.	Site visits	364(45.5%)
2.	Role-play	31(3.9%)
3.	Video	46(5.8%)
4.	Story Telling	25(3.1%)
5.	Reading text books	23(2.9%)
6.	Inquiries	97(12.1%)
7.	Computer Assisted Learning	52(6.5%)
8.	Group work	128(16.0%)
9.	Discussion/Lecture	34(4.3%)
	Total	800(100.0%)

Table 1 above demonstrates that the most interesting fieldwork methods in relation to learning and teaching of history is a 'site visit' with 45.5% (N=800) responses. Second is 'group work' and third 'inquiries' with 16.0% and 12.1% respectively.

On the other hand, it is very surprising to discover that the least interesting fieldwork method is 'reading text books' with 2.9%. It followed by 'story telling' (3.1%) and 'discussion/lecture' (4.3%). In fact, these are among the commonest teaching approaches in schools.

Question 2: How are the students' perceptions of site visits in history based on different background including states, gender, types of school, level of education and, ethnicity?

Table 2 presents the overall response of both states. According to states, both Perak and Terengganu respond the highest to 'site visit' with 46.3% and 44.3% respectively.

In reality, Kuala Terengganu has many more historical sites compare to Hilir Perak. Amongst the prominent examples in Kuala Terengganu town as mentioned by pupils are the MaziahPalace, White Mosque, BatuBurukBeach, Bukit Puteri and Payang Market. On the other hand there are only three major historical sites in Hilir Perak namely the clock tower, TelukIntan river port and a railway bridge.

However, the score of responses in Perak were higher than Terengganu. This indicates that the interest of pupils on site visit of local history is not necessarily based on the availability and quantity of historical heritage around them. Possibly, it depends much on how they utilise the sources.

Table 2

Students' perception on the learning and teaching of fieldwork approaches according to states

Respondents (N=800)	Fieldwork Methods of Local History (Responses/Percentage)								
	Site Visit	Role-play	Video	Story Telling	Text-books	Inquiries	CAL	Group Work	Lecture
Perak (n=400)	185 (46.3)	15 (3.8)	28 (7.0)	17 (4.2)	18 (4.5)	51 (12.7)	19 (4.8)	66 (16.5)	1 (0.2)
Terengganu (n=400)	179 (44.8)	16 (4.4)	18 (4.5)	8 (2.0)	5 (1.2)	46 (11.5)	33 (8.3)	62 (15.5)	33 (8.3)

Table 2 above also reveals that the least interesting fieldwork methods to Perak was 'lecture/discussion' with 0.2% and for Terengganu were 'reading text books' with 1.2% respondents.

Table 3 below shows the students' perceptions on site visit in history according to type of schools. The table indicates that 'site visit' is the most interesting fieldwork methods. Both science and religious have the same number of responses, that is 51.4% (n=140), and the regular had 42.3% (n=520).

Table 3

Students' perception on the learning and teaching of fieldwork approaches according to type of schools

Fieldwork Methods of Local History (Responses/Percentage)	
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Respondents	Site Visit	Role-play	Video	Story Telling	Text-books	Inquiries	CAL	Group Work	Lecture
(N=800)									
Regular (n=520)	220 (42.3)	16 (3.1)	28 (5.4)	14 (2.7)	19 (3.6)	64 (12.3)	36 (6.9)	102 (19.6)	21 (4.0)
Science (n=140)	72 (51.4)	10 (7.1)	10 (7.1)	5 (3.6)	2 (1.4)	15 (10.7)	5 (3.6)	13 (9.3)	8 (5.7)
Religious (n=140)	72 (51.4)	5 (3.6)	8 (5.7)	6 (4.3)	2 (1.4)	18 (12.8)	5 (3.6)	13 (9.3)	5 (3.6)

The above table presents that both science and religious have the same score on the least interesting fieldwork methods that is 'reading text books' with 1.4% responses. There is a possibility that the teaching methods in science schools are mostly on a practical basis thus they feel 'dull and bored' reading text books. This would also be true in some subjects in religious schools.

The distribution of responses on fieldwork methods according to level of education is presented in table 4. The table shows that each year chose 'site visit' as the most interesting fieldwork method; the highest was Form Four 63.7% (n=80), followed by Form One 47.1%, Form Two 42.9% and Form Three 40.4% from 240 respondents each.

Table 4

Students' perception on the learning and teaching of fieldwork approaches according to level of education

Respondents	Fieldwork Methods of Local History (Responses/Percentage)								
	Site Visit	Role-play	Video	Story Telling	Text-books	Inquiries	CAL	Group Work	Lecture
(N=800)									
Form 1 (n=240)	113 (47.1)	6 (2.5)	14 (5.8)	10 (4.7)	14 (5.8)	29 (12.1)	16 (6.7)	29 (12.1)	9 (3.8)
Form 2 (n=240)	103 (42.9)	9 (3.8)	16 (6.7)	9 (3.7)	6 (2.5)	33 (13.8)	13 (5.4)	43 (17.9)	8 (3.3)
Form 3 (n=240)	97 (40.4)	13 (5.4)	13 (5.4)	6 (2.5)	2 (0.8)	30 (12.5)	18 (7.5)	48 (20.0)	13 (5.4)
Form 4	51	3	3	0	1	5	5	8	4

(n=80)	(63.7)	(3.8)	(3.8)	(00)	(1.2)	(6.3)	(6.3)	(10.0)	(5.0)
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On the other hand, there were different responses on the least interesting fieldwork methods between levels of education. The least interesting to Form One was 'role-play' with 2.5%, while, both Form Two and Form Three chose 'reading textbooks' with 2.5% and 0.8% respectively. Possibly, the Form One students were not exposed to any role play teaching methods, therefore, they simply said these were not interesting. Form Two, and especially Form Three students, have been exposed to various kinds of teaching methods and were burdened by many 'readings' for their LSA at the end of the year. However, 'role-play' and CAL were very rarely used by any form as mentioned by principals during the informal interviews with them.

Finally, the least interesting for Form Four was 'story telling' which had no response. Possibly, there were no 'story telling' methods used in Form Four, the teachers most probably thinking these only suitable for primary pupils. Another possibility was that the teacher was not really competent to present attractive stories based on historical events.

Table 4 below demonstrates the distribution of responses on fieldwork methods according to gender. The table shows that the most interesting fieldwork methods for both boys and girls were 'site visit' with 47.5% and 43.5% accordingly, from the total of 400 responses each.

On the other hand, the least interesting for boys were 'role-play' with 2.0% and girls were 'reading textbooks' with 2.3%. Possibly, there was no 'role-play' method in their learning of local history, while, the girls might felt that 'reading textbooks' as a passive activity compared to other learning methods of the subject.

Table 4
Students' perception on the learning and teaching of fieldwork approaches according to gender

Respondents	Fieldwork Methods of Local History (Responses/Percentage)								
	Site Visit	Role play	Video	Story	Text books	Inquiries	CAL	Group	Lecture
Boys (N=800) (n=400)	190 (47.5)	8 (2.0)	24 (6.0)	10 (2.5)	14 (3.5)	47 (11.8)	27 (6.8)	69 (17.3)	11 (2.8)
Girls (n=400)	174 (43.5)	23 (5.8)	22 (5.5)	15 (3.8)	9 (2.3)	50 (12.5)	25 (6.3)	59 (14.8)	23 (5.8)

Table 5 shows that the most interesting fieldwork methods in accordance with ethnic groups was 'site visit'. The responses of the Malays were 47.5% (n=520), the Chinese 44.5% (n=168) and the Indians 36.5% (n=104).

Table 5
Students' perception on the learning and teaching of fieldwork approaches according to ethnic groups

Respondents (N=800)	Fieldwork Methods of Local History (Responses/Percentage)								
	Site Visit	Role play	Vide o	Story Telling	Text books	Inquiries	CAL	Group Work	Lecture
Malays (n=520)	251 (47.5)	25 (4.7)	31 (5.9)	18 (3.4)	10 (1.9)	59 (11.2)	35 (6.6)	72 (13.6)	27 (5.1)
Chinese (n=168)	75 (44.6)	6 (3.6)	7 (4.2)	5 (3.0)	7 (4.2)	25 (14.9)	7 (4.2)	31 (18.4)	5 (3.0)
Indians (n=104)	38 (36.5)	0 (00)	8 (7.7)	2 (1.9)	6 (5.8)	13 (12.5)	10 (9.6)	25 (24.0)	2 (1.9)

With regard to the above table, the least interesting fieldwork methods for the Malays were 'reading text book' with 1.9%, the Chinese had 3.0% on 'story telling' and 'lecture', and the Indians no response on 'role-play'. With the least choice on 'role-play', probably the Chinese and the Indians were ashamed because they are not fluent in the Malay language, the medium of instruction in schools. Therefore, there should be more allocation of times and effort to teach the non-Malay pupils until they are competence as their Malay counter-parts especially in the conversation of the Malay language. If this is the case, it would not be appropriate enforcing it in the curriculum but no sufficient preparation and practice in the teaching and learning.

It is clear from the above tables that all respondents chose 'site visit' as the most interesting methods in relation to learning and teaching of history fieldwork. The discouraging score of role-play and CAL were possibly due to the fact that these methods were very rarely used in the teaching and learning of history as stated by some of the principals during the informal interview with the researcher.

However, realising on the significant role and benefit that the students would acquire, first, from the 'role-play' towards better understanding of historical facts (Nichol 1980), and, second, from 'CAL' towards the familiarisation of new technology (Dickinson et. al 1986, Reynolds 1990), commitments and achievement of the Multimedia Super Corridor projects aspired by the government (*Utusan Malaysia*: 7 May 1996), the researcher decided to include these questions in the research.

The aim is to see how students perceived on these methods and make necessary suggestions, especially based on the output from the interview as presented in the following section.

Question 3: What are the advantages the students would acquire from the site visit in history, ICSS Malaysia?

The respondents raised different views concerning the advantages of site visit in history. The views were explore in the interview session between the selected students and the researcher.

One of the students from a regular school in Terengganu said 'The visit was interesting because we could see history as real. History is not just the imagination of historians. We realised that what we learn in class

was based on reality. We could see the past around us' (P33). This is in line with another student (P32) who stated 'We can relate and reinforce our knowledge acquired from the book with the history of certain figures or persons. The pamphlets, books and information board gave details about the objects on site. We could find new information and relate the site's locality to national events'.

A student (P37) of regular school claimed that she could get a different way of looking, such as the location and built up of the site. She added, normally, it was not all built at the same time, but took years to construct. Her friend (P38) stated that the site or building completeness provided answers to a number of questions and told us about different local noblemen and noblewomen, especially the rulers of the state of Terengganu.

Form Three religious school students (P20, P21, P23) said 'We can know that people were killed on attacking and defending the site, such as a fort at Bukit Puteri defending the Kuala Terengganu town from the Japanese invasion in the Second World War'.

Students (P39, P40) from a science school explained, if the complete parts of the palace could provide new information, then the incomplete parts of it could provide scope for hypotheses about the layout, location and site appeal to children allowing them to explore and identify with the people of the past. It had scope for imagination and the student could try to rebuild the past. Another student (P27) stated that imagining what it was like to live there, can show how people defended the palace and the difference between life then and life today. This also could help the pupil to try and present things differently in their response to the visit.

One of the students admitted 'The ruins are used as an excellent primary source of evidence of changes through time' (P18). This is true when referring to 'Istana Kuning' (YellowPalace) in Kuala Kangsar, Perak, a good example of a traditional palace of a Malay Sultanate with its unique and fascinating architectural design. The students could tell it is a palace and not something else. Thus, it could make the visit bring history to life.

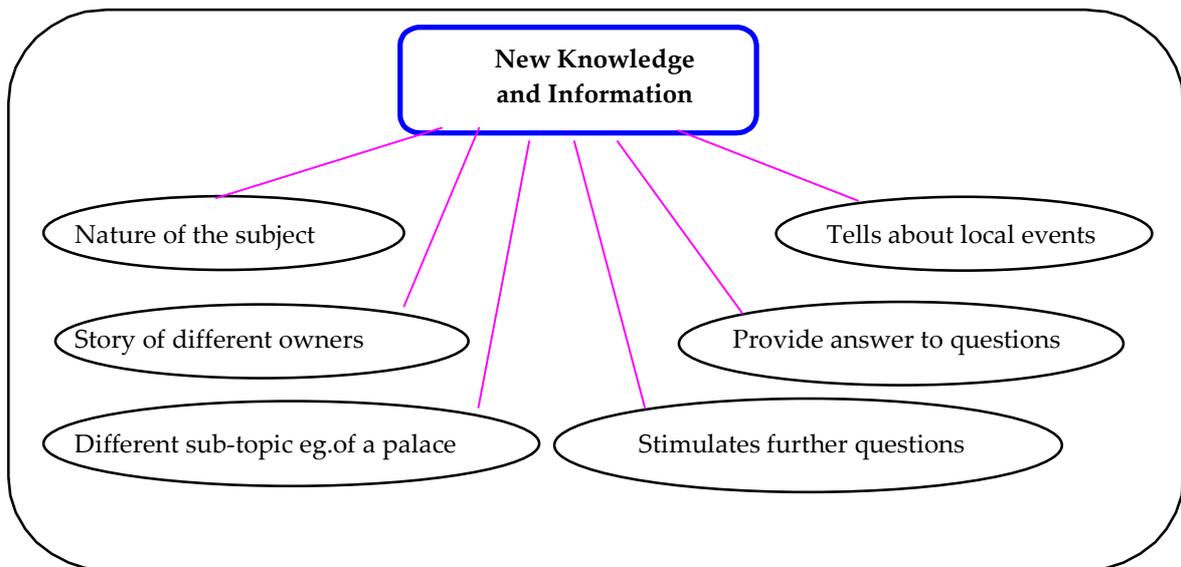
Form Four science students (P16, P17, P18,19) said 'Being in a palace or site helped us to become interested in empathy and role play activities and relate to the past. It could be used to find out how much we already knew about the palace and this could be applied to the site. This could be observed from the questions in the worksheets given by teachers'. Another students (P35, P36) said 'we can find out about local leaders, local events, investigate the ruins, graffiti, information boards, textures and colours of the palace. These are attractive and can make our learning environment more interesting'.

Students (P6, P7, P8) of regular school admitted that the visit had a lot of different places to explore. It brought students to something different from the classroom. It was valuable purely as an enjoyable day out, different to routine, that is students remember the day because they are actually not sitting bored in school. They believed that some of the students may not have travelled beyond their immediate locality much before. Moreover, they claimed, the site visit is a visually attractive landscape and has so much variety. Other students (P9, P10) stated 'this is good as a stimulus for challenging work and very motivating. At the same time we could learn together with our friends'.

The facts revealed and discussed by the students in the interview with the researcher are illustrated in figure 1 and figure 2 below:

Figure 1

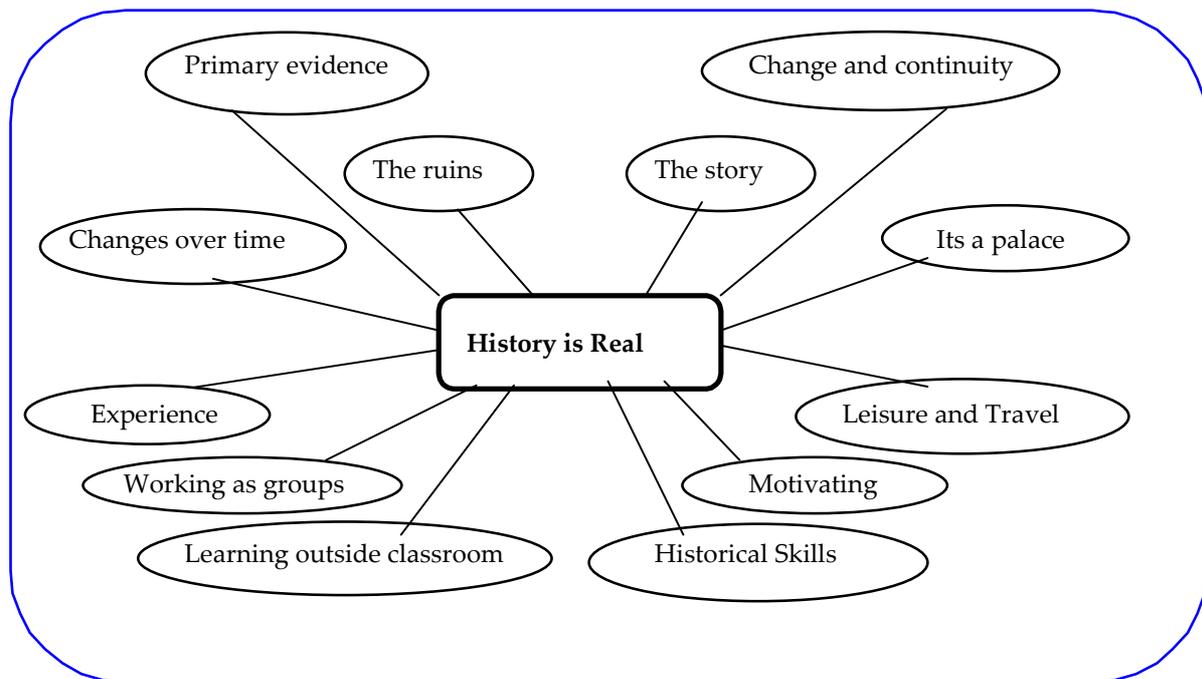
The site visit is interesting



A Form Three student (P1) stated that a site visit in history gives an opportunity to student to get away from the text book. His friends (P2, P3, P4) stated that it exposes students to the development of historical processes which are relevant to history study, including observation and discovery, collection and classification of evidence, deduction from evidence and presentation of conclusions. This learning is varied in nature and can help students of all ages and abilities. E.Hooper-Greenhill (1994) stated that what is perhaps the most useful development here is the sharpening of the intelligence and of the powers of observation. Not only is the intelligence of the average child sharpened, but what seems to be very valuable is that a boy or girl who appears to be backward or slow in class very often turns out to be keen and intelligent in the study. She further stated that besides this, history can aid an achievement to which teachers rightly attach considerable importance, that of increasing the children's critical faculties and their capacity for self-expression. The students are being made to think and feel for themselves.

Figure 2

'History is real' as proved by the visits



Moreover, students (P5, P6, P7) agreed that site visits allow for student-centred learning, giving students the chance to improve their own skills in using concrete evidence and developing essential historical skills. Students from Science School (P10, P11, P12, P14) stressed that at the same time it enables students to develop truly cross-curricular skills of various subjects including mathematics, science, micro technology, geography, language, living skills, arts, moral values and self-confident training. More importantly, they can achieve the various requirements of the programmes of study stated in the ICSS history.

From the above, it is clear that the most interesting fieldwork methods in relation to learning and teaching of history is the 'site visit' to which almost half of the respondents show their commitment. However, there were differences on the least interesting methods and, very surprisingly, 'reading text books' and 'role-play' were in this category. These need to be investigated further because reading text books is the base of knowledge acquisition in schools curriculum while a role-play, beside accumulating more information, makes the 'fact' alive in class and can reinforce understanding and remembrance.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, the study shows the fact that site visit approach could be the most successful strategy used by teachers in planning and conducting 'independent learning' activities at all ability levels. Such should formulate critical thinking, open-ended questioning, which in turn, encourages more responses, inductive thinking, deductive reasoning which can be useful in understanding what the future might be and lateral thinking which is important in solving problems. Finally, site visit technique in history

fieldwork enable students to achieve the objectives of the Malaysian Philosophy of Education and Malaysian Development Plan in producing a First Class Human Capital to fulfil the 'jasmani or physical', 'emosi or emotion', 'rohani or spiritual' 'intelek or intellectual' 'sosialisasi or socialization', 'alam or environment', and 'hamba or servant of God' – acronym *JERISAH*- development of all students. It is hoped that the study would raise concern, awareness and benefit to all involve in the teaching and learning of history in the ICSS Malaysia, and, school students across the world in the era of globalisation.

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