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Presenting a Teaching Model for Ancient History Based on the Lived Experiences of Secondary School Teachers in Baghdad

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted with the aim of identifying teachers' lived experiences in teaching Ancient History and presenting an appropriate instructional model. The research employed a mixed exploratory design consisting of qualitative and quantitative phases. In the first (qualitative) phase, a descriptive phenomenological approach was utilized. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty Ancient History teachers in Baghdad who had at least five years of teaching experience. Participants were selected through purposive sampling using criterion-based techniques, and the sampling process continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. In the first phase, the research instrument consisted of semi-structured interviews. Data analysis was carried out using Colaizzi's seven-step method, resulting in the identification of 120 initial concepts, which were organized into twenty-four subcategories and six main categories, including communication and interaction skills as the highest priority, teaching methods, educational content, learning assessment, teachers' professional development, and educational technology. In the quantitative phase, a descriptive-survey method was employed. The statistical population consisted of all secondary school teachers in Baghdad who were teaching Ancient History during the 2024–2025 academic year, totaling 320 individuals. Using convenience sampling and Cochran's formula, 175 participants were selected. The instrument used in this phase was a researcher-developed questionnaire containing 120 items designed based on the findings of the qualitative phase. Its validation was conducted by ten experts in the field of history education. Content validity was assessed using Lawshe's formula, and the reliability of the instrument was calculated through Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results of the quantitative section indicated that all dimensions were evaluated significantly above the average level. Structural analysis demonstrated that the proposed six-dimensional model had an acceptable fit, and the factor loadings of all dimensions were at an acceptable level, indicating the construct validity of the proposed model. The presented model places special emphasis on communication skills as the fundamental basis of effective teaching and highlights the necessity of employing active and interactive methods such as storytelling, drama, role-playing, project-based learning, appropriate content selection and organization, multidimensional and formative assessment, and continuous professional development.

Keywords: Teaching methods, communication skills, professional development, assessment

Introduction

Teaching history has long been regarded as one of the most influential domains within social sciences education because it plays a central role in shaping cultural identity, historical consciousness, critical thinking, and civic understanding among

students. Unlike many school subjects that primarily focus on the transmission of factual knowledge, history education requires the integration of interpretation, analysis, narrative understanding, and contextual reasoning. Ancient History, in particular, occupies a unique place within the curriculum because it introduces students to the origins of civilizations, political systems, cultural traditions, and social transformations that have influenced the contemporary world. Consequently, the quality of teaching in this field significantly affects students' motivation, engagement, and understanding of historical processes. Recent educational studies have increasingly emphasized that effective history teaching should move beyond memorization of events and dates toward approaches that encourage interpretation, reflection, dialogue, and historical inquiry (1, 2). In this regard, teachers are not merely transmitters of information but facilitators of learning experiences capable of connecting historical knowledge to students' social and intellectual realities. The complexity of this role highlights the importance of understanding teachers' practical experiences and instructional perspectives in order to develop effective teaching models for history education.

The increasing transformation of educational systems during recent decades has altered expectations regarding teachers' professional competencies and classroom practices. Educational institutions are now expected to cultivate critical thinking, communication skills, creativity, collaborative learning, and learner-centered instruction. These changes have had substantial implications for the teaching of history, especially Ancient History, which traditionally relied on lecture-based instruction and textbook-centered methods. Contemporary educational approaches stress active learning strategies, dialogic teaching, project-based learning, storytelling, historical analysis, and inquiry-oriented instruction as essential dimensions of effective history education (1, 3). Research has shown that students' understanding of historical concepts becomes deeper when teachers employ interactive pedagogical techniques and connect historical phenomena to present-day realities. In addition, the integration of historical thinking skills, including source evaluation, interpretation of evidence, chronological reasoning, and comparative analysis, has become increasingly important in modern history curricula (2). These transformations require teachers to possess not only disciplinary knowledge but also communication abilities, pedagogical flexibility, technological competence, and reflective teaching practices.

Teachers' lived experiences provide valuable insight into the realities of classroom teaching because they reveal the practical challenges, strategies, and interpretations that shape educational processes. Phenomenological and experience-based studies in education emphasize that teachers construct professional knowledge through direct interaction with students, classroom environments, institutional expectations, and sociocultural contexts. Therefore, investigating teachers' lived experiences can contribute significantly to the design of context-sensitive educational models. Several studies have explored teachers' experiences in different educational settings and have demonstrated the importance of understanding the subjective dimensions of teaching practice. For example, research on teachers' lived experiences in virtual education environments identified communication barriers, instructional adaptation challenges, and the need for professional empowerment programs to improve teaching effectiveness (4). Similarly, studies on student-teachers during the coronavirus period emphasized the importance of adaptability, reflective learning, and emotional resilience in teaching practice (5). These findings indicate that educational effectiveness cannot be fully understood without examining teachers' practical and experiential perspectives.

The significance of lived experiences is particularly evident in studies related to curriculum implementation and educational evaluation. Research investigating teachers' perceptions of descriptive evaluation systems demonstrated that teachers often develop informal strategies and adaptive approaches in response to curriculum reforms and institutional expectations (6, 7). Such studies suggest that teachers' professional experiences contain implicit pedagogical knowledge that may not be represented in official educational frameworks. Likewise, phenomenological analyses of educational leadership revealed that communication, trust-building, interaction, and collaborative participation are among the most influential dimensions of

successful educational environments (8). Effective communication has also been identified as a key determinant of successful teaching in multigrade and complex classroom settings (9). These findings collectively demonstrate that teaching quality depends not only on formal instructional methods but also on interpersonal relationships, emotional engagement, and contextual responsiveness. Consequently, understanding teachers' lived experiences in history classrooms may provide a more comprehensive foundation for designing effective instructional models.

History education possesses distinctive pedagogical characteristics that differentiate it from many other academic disciplines. Teaching history requires teachers to balance factual accuracy with narrative engagement, conceptual understanding with critical reflection, and chronological organization with thematic interpretation. In Ancient History education, this complexity becomes even more pronounced because many historical events, civilizations, and cultural practices are temporally distant from students' daily experiences. As a result, teachers often face the challenge of making historical content meaningful, relatable, and engaging for learners. Previous studies have emphasized that the attractiveness of history courses depends heavily on teachers' instructional creativity, use of storytelling, interactive teaching methods, and ability to connect historical topics to students' lived realities (10). Teachers who employ dramatic narration, role-playing, visual materials, and inquiry-based learning strategies are generally more successful in stimulating students' curiosity and participation. Furthermore, studies focusing on teachers' instructional experiences in history education have highlighted the importance of reflective teaching, pedagogical adaptation, and classroom interaction in facilitating meaningful historical learning (3, 11).

In addition to pedagogical strategies, professional competencies and teacher characteristics play an essential role in educational effectiveness. Research on effective teaching has consistently shown that successful teachers demonstrate emotional balance, communication skills, empathy, motivation-building capacities, and classroom management abilities (12). Such characteristics are particularly important in history classrooms because historical topics often involve complex social, cultural, and political issues that require careful discussion and student engagement. The teacher's ability to create an interactive and supportive learning environment can significantly influence students' attitudes toward history education. Moreover, contemporary educational literature emphasizes that professional development should be regarded as a continuous process involving reflective practice, collaborative learning, and pedagogical innovation (13). Post-pandemic educational studies have further highlighted the growing importance of digital competencies, technological integration, and adaptive instructional methods in modern classrooms. Teachers increasingly need to combine traditional pedagogical practices with digital tools, multimedia resources, and online learning environments in order to meet evolving educational demands (4, 13).

Another important aspect of educational research concerns students' perceptions and experiences within classroom environments. Studies examining students' lived experiences in social studies courses have indicated that students value participation, interaction, emotional engagement, and practical relevance in educational settings (14). These findings suggest that effective teaching models should not only address curriculum content but also consider students' psychological and motivational needs. Similarly, phenomenological studies in environmental literacy education have shown that experiential learning, contextualized instruction, and active participation contribute significantly to meaningful learning experiences (15). Such evidence reinforces the argument that educational models should emerge from authentic classroom experiences rather than purely theoretical assumptions. In the context of Ancient History teaching, understanding teachers' experiences may therefore provide insight into how instructional methods, communication strategies, content organization, assessment approaches, and professional practices can be aligned to create more effective learning environments.

The educational and social context of Arab societies also adds an additional dimension to the importance of studying history teaching practices. Historical education in these contexts is often closely connected to issues of cultural identity, collective

memory, national heritage, and social transformation. Teachers therefore play a critical role in mediating historical knowledge and shaping students' understanding of their historical and cultural backgrounds. Research examining the role of teachers in Arab societies has emphasized that teachers' responsibilities extend beyond instructional delivery to include cultural guidance, social leadership, and identity formation (16). This broader educational role requires teachers to develop sophisticated communication abilities, ethical awareness, and pedagogical flexibility. In history education specifically, teachers must navigate diverse interpretations of historical events while encouraging critical reflection and constructive dialogue among students. Such responsibilities increase the importance of identifying practical and contextually grounded teaching strategies capable of enhancing both educational effectiveness and student engagement.

Despite the growing body of research on educational experiences, teacher perceptions, and history instruction, relatively limited attention has been devoted to developing comprehensive teaching models for Ancient History based explicitly on teachers' lived experiences. Existing studies have often focused on isolated dimensions such as instructional challenges, technological adaptation, classroom communication, or evaluation methods, while fewer studies have attempted to integrate these dimensions into a coherent instructional framework. Furthermore, many educational models are developed primarily through theoretical assumptions rather than empirical exploration of teachers' practical experiences within real classroom contexts. This gap is particularly significant in the context of secondary education, where Ancient History teaching requires a combination of disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical expertise, emotional engagement, and interactive communication strategies. Therefore, there is a clear need for research capable of systematically identifying the experiential dimensions of effective Ancient History teaching and translating them into a comprehensive instructional model applicable to secondary education settings.

Given the educational importance of Ancient History, the evolving expectations of modern teaching, the central role of teachers' lived experiences in instructional effectiveness, and the limited availability of contextually grounded instructional models in this field, the present study aimed to identify the lived experiences of secondary school teachers in teaching Ancient History and to develop an appropriate instructional model based on those experiences.

Methods and Materials

The present study aimed to identify teachers' lived experiences in teaching Ancient History in order to develop an appropriate instructional model. Therefore, in terms of purpose, the study was applied research, and in terms of the time of data collection, it was cross-sectional. Furthermore, the research employed a mixed-method exploratory design consisting of qualitative and quantitative phases. The participants in the qualitative phase included Ancient History teachers in Baghdad with a minimum of five years of teaching experience. Participants were selected through purposive sampling using a criterion-based technique, with the inclusion criteria consisting of at least five years of experience in teaching Ancient History and willingness to participate in the study. The sampling process continued until theoretical saturation was reached, which occurred after interviews with 20 teachers. The statistical population in the quantitative phase included all secondary school teachers in Baghdad who were teaching Ancient History during the 2024–2025 academic year. The total population consisted of 320 teachers. Sampling was conducted using a non-random convenience sampling method, and based on Cochran's sample size formula, 175 participants were selected and the questionnaire was distributed among them.

Data collection in the qualitative phase was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 20 participants during the autumn of 2024. In the quantitative phase, the data collection instrument was a researcher-developed questionnaire designed to evaluate the proposed model derived from the qualitative findings. After assessing face validity through expert evaluation in the qualitative phase, the questionnaire was provided to 10 specialists in the field of history education, and the Content

Validity Ratio (CVR) was calculated according to Lawshe's formula. Since the validity coefficient of all items exceeded the minimum threshold value of 0.62 specified in Lawshe's standard table, the items were accepted. To assess the reliability of the instrument, two major indices, Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha, were employed. The results indicated that the composite reliability values for all questionnaire dimensions exceeded 0.70 (for example, 0.874 for the teaching methods dimension and 0.891 for the educational content dimension), demonstrating high internal consistency among the items within each dimension and confirming the reliability of the instrument in measuring the related constructs. Furthermore, the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.923, which is considered very high (above 0.70), thereby confirming the strong internal consistency of all questionnaire items and the excellent overall reliability of the measurement instrument. Since the conditions $CR > 0.70$, $AVE > 0.50$, and $CR > AVE$ were satisfied in all cases, the questionnaire demonstrated strong statistical robustness and high validity in measuring the different dimensions of the proposed model. This rigorous process of validity and reliability assessment provided sufficient assurance for the use of the quantitative data in inferential analyses and final model fitting.

Qualitative data analysis in this study was conducted using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step descriptive phenomenological method. In the quantitative phase, data analysis was performed using the one-sample t-test, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM). Model fit was assessed using absolute fit indices, comparative fit indices, and parsimonious fit indices through AMOS-24 software.

Findings and Results

The findings of the qualitative phase are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Classification of Initial Concepts into Axial and Selective Codes

Main Concept (Selective Code)	Subconcept (Axial Code)	Initial Concepts (Open Codes)
1. Teaching Methods	1-1. Storytelling	Use of storytelling, engaging narration, character-centered narration, use of analogies, creating suspense in narration
	1-2. Performance and Dramatization	Use of dramatization, enactment of historical scenes, short theatrical performances, group performances, use of costumes and props
	1-3. Role-Playing	Role-playing historical characters, acting as social classes, simulation of historical events, historical debates, imitation of historical figures
	1-4. Project-Based Learning	Project-based learning, group research, model construction, poster preparation, group presentations
2. Educational Content	2-1. Selection of Appropriate Content	Selection of appropriate content, choosing engaging materials, prioritization of topics, age-appropriate selection, attention to prior knowledge
	2-2. Content Organization	Logical organization of content, chronological sequencing of events, linking concepts, thematic categorization, creation of mind maps
	2-3. Connecting Past and Present	Linking past and present, comparison with today's world, application to contemporary life, learning lessons from history, influence of the past on the present
	2-4. Engaging Content	Engaging and attractive content, use of interesting stories, unexpected topics, interactive content, diversity in content presentation
3. Assessment	3-1. Continuous Assessment	Continuous assessment, ongoing grading, monitoring performance, regular feedback, recording progress
	3-2. Creative Assessment	Creative assessment, innovative assessment methods, game-based assessment, creative testing, assessment projects
	3-3. Multidimensional Assessment	Multidimensional assessment, evaluation of diverse skills, cognitive and affective assessment, attention to individual differences, participatory assessment
	3-4. Formative Assessment	Formative assessment, modification of the learning process, continuous guidance, identification of weaknesses, continuous improvement
4. Educational Technology	4-1. Use of Technology	Use of technology, software applications, internet use, virtual classrooms, digital tools
	4-2. Multimedia Resources	Multimedia resources, use of videos, image presentation, use of audio materials, educational animations
5. Communication Skills	5-1. Effective Communication	Establishing effective communication, two-way dialogue, listening to opinions, respect for viewpoints, creating a friendly atmosphere

	5-2. Motivation Enhancement	Enhancing motivation, encouragement and praise, creating curiosity, providing appropriate challenges, setting clear goals
	5-3. Classroom Management	Classroom management, maintaining discipline, behavior control, guiding activities, time management
	5-4. Two-Way Interaction	Two-way interaction, active participation, question-and-answer sessions, group discussions, exchange of ideas
6. Professional Development	6-1. Continuous Learning	Continuous learning, reading books, updating knowledge, learning new methods, following recent developments
	6-2. Collaboration with Colleagues	Collaboration with colleagues, exchange of experiences, consultation, teamwork, learning from others
	6-3. Participation in Training Courses	Participation in courses, in-service training, educational workshops, seminars, conferences
	6-4. Reflective Practice	Reflective practice, self-assessment, reflection on performance, critique and review, identification of strengths and weaknesses
	6-5. Research and Study	Research and study, investigating topics, studying resources, information seeking, reading books
	6-6. Innovation in Teaching	Innovation in teaching, creativity in methods, development of new methods, novel experiences, continuous improvement of teaching approaches
Total	24 Axial Codes	120 Open Codes

The table below presents the descriptive statistics of the dimensions of the Ancient History teaching model.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Dimensions of the Ancient History Teaching Model

Dimension	Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Variance	Coefficient of Variation
Teaching Methods	10	4.23	0.67	2.80	5.00	0.45	15.8%
Educational Content	8	4.18	0.71	2.63	5.00	0.50	17.0%
Assessment	7	4.15	0.74	2.57	5.00	0.55	17.8%
Educational Technology	6	3.98	0.82	2.33	5.00	0.67	20.6%
Communication Skills	8	4.31	0.63	2.88	5.00	0.40	14.6%
Professional Development	6	4.12	0.76	2.50	5.00	0.58	18.4%
Total Questionnaire	45	4.16	0.58	2.73	5.00	0.34	13.9%

The results of the descriptive statistics indicate that the highest mean score belonged to the communication skills dimension (4.31), while the lowest mean score was related to the educational technology dimension (3.98). All dimensions had mean scores above 3.50, indicating their high importance from the teachers' perspective. The lowest coefficient of variation was related to communication skills (14.6%), reflecting a greater consensus among teachers in this area, whereas the highest coefficient of variation was associated with educational technology (20.6%), which may be attributed to differences in teachers' access to and proficiency in the use of technology.

The results of the one-sample t-test for the dimensions of the teaching model are presented in the following table.

Table 3. Results of the One-Sample t-Test for the Dimensions of the Teaching Model

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level	Mean Difference
Teaching Methods	4.23	0.67	24.32	174	0.000	1.23
Educational Content	4.18	0.71	21.98	174	0.000	1.18
Assessment	4.15	0.74	20.54	174	0.000	1.15
Educational Technology	3.98	0.82	15.83	174	0.000	0.98
Communication Skills	4.31	0.63	27.56	174	0.000	1.31
Professional Development	4.12	0.76	19.47	174	0.000	1.12

The results of the one-sample t-test with a cut-off point of 3 indicate that all dimensions of the proposed model were evaluated significantly above the average level ($p < .001$). The highest t-value was related to communication skills (27.56), whereas the lowest t-value was associated with educational technology (15.83). These findings demonstrate that teachers

considered all dimensions of the model important; however, communication skills received greater emphasis compared to the other dimensions.

The final research model is presented below.

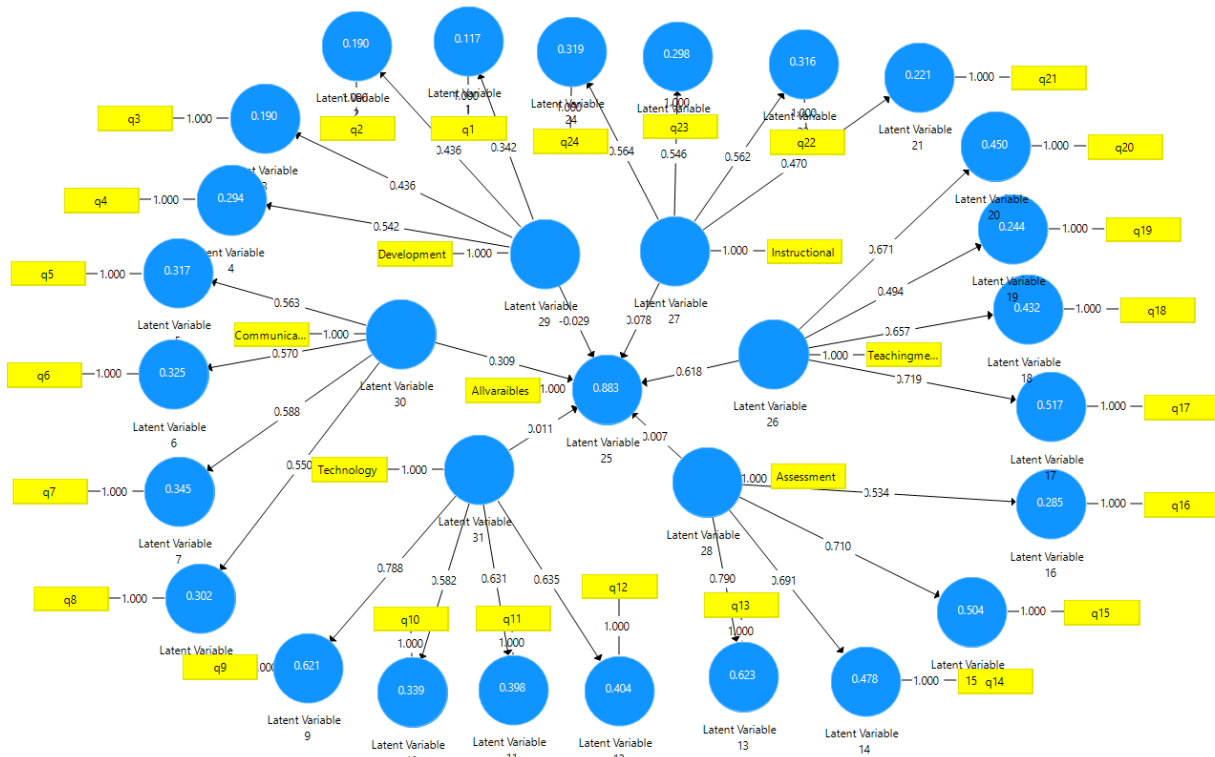


Figure 1. Final Research Model

The fit indices of the confirmatory factor analysis model are presented in the following table.

Table 4. Fit Indices of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Acceptable Value	Status
χ^2/df	2.18	<3	Acceptable
GFI	0.91	>0.90	Acceptable
AGFI	0.89	>0.85	Acceptable
CFI	0.94	>0.90	Acceptable
NFI	0.92	>0.90	Acceptable
RMSEA	0.068	<0.08	Acceptable
SRMR	0.054	<0.08	Acceptable

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicate that the proposed model demonstrated a satisfactory fit. All fit indices were within acceptable ranges, confirming the appropriateness of the six-factor structure of the proposed model. The RMSEA value of 0.068, which is below 0.08, indicates an acceptable approximation error of the model. Furthermore, the CFI and NFI values above 0.90 indicate a good fit between the model and the observed data.

The factor loadings of the dimensions of the Ancient History teaching model are presented in the following table.

Table 5. Factor Loadings of the Dimensions of the Ancient History Teaching Model

Dimension	Factor Loading	Standard Error	Critical Ratio	Significance Level
Teaching Methods	0.78	0.062	12.58	0.000
Educational Content	0.82	0.058	14.14	0.000
Assessment	0.75	0.065	11.54	0.000
Educational Technology	0.68	0.071	9.58	0.000
Communication Skills	0.85	0.054	15.74	0.000

Professional Development	0.73	0.067	10.90	0.000
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The factor loading results indicate that all dimensions had acceptable factor loadings (above 0.60). The highest factor loading belonged to communication skills (0.85), while the lowest factor loading was related to educational technology (0.68). All factor loadings were significant at the 0.001 level, indicating satisfactory construct validity of the proposed model. These findings confirm that the identified dimensions adequately explain the overall construct of the Ancient History teaching model.

The results of the model validation by experts are presented in the following table.

Table 6. Results of Model Validation by Experts

Model Dimension	Number of Agreements	CVR	CVI	Status
Teaching Methods	9	0.80	0.85	Confirmed
Educational Content	9	0.80	0.88	Confirmed
Assessment	8	0.60	0.82	Confirmed
Educational Technology	8	0.60	0.78	Confirmed
Communication Skills	10	1.00	0.92	Confirmed
Professional Development	9	0.80	0.86	Confirmed
Overall Mean	8.8	0.77	0.85	Confirmed

The results of the content validation conducted by 10 experts indicate that the proposed model possessed satisfactory content validity. The mean CVR value was 0.77, which exceeded the threshold value of 0.62 for 10 experts, indicating the necessity of all model dimensions from the experts' perspectives. Furthermore, the mean CVI value was 0.85, which exceeded 0.79, indicating the clarity and appropriateness of the model dimensions. The highest level of expert agreement was related to the communication skills dimension (CVR = 1.00), reflecting the critical importance of this dimension in the effective teaching of Ancient History.

The final instructional model for teaching Ancient History based on teachers' lived experiences is presented in the following table.

Table 7. Final Instructional Model for Teaching Ancient History Based on Teachers' Lived Experiences

Rank	Dimension	Components	Importance (Mean)	CVR
1	Communication Skills	Establishing effective communication, motivation enhancement, classroom management, two-way interaction	4.31	1.00
2	Teaching Methods	Storytelling, dramatization, role-playing, project-based learning	4.23	0.80
3	Educational Content	Selection of appropriate content, organization, linking past and present, engaging content	4.18	0.80
4	Assessment	Continuous, creative, multidimensional, and formative assessment	4.15	0.60
5	Professional Development	Continuous learning, collaboration, reflective practice, innovation	4.12	0.80
6	Educational Technology	Digital tools, multimedia resources	3.98	0.60

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study demonstrated that the proposed instructional model for teaching Ancient History based on teachers' lived experiences consisted of six major dimensions, including communication skills, teaching methods, educational content, assessment, professional development, and educational technology. The quantitative findings further indicated that all dimensions of the model were evaluated significantly above the average level, suggesting that teachers considered all identified components essential for effective Ancient History instruction. Among the identified dimensions, communication skills achieved the highest mean score and the highest factor loading, indicating that teachers perceived effective interaction, classroom communication, motivation building, and participatory engagement as the most critical components of successful

history teaching. These findings highlight the central role of teacher-student interaction in history education and suggest that the effectiveness of instructional practices in Ancient History depends heavily on the teacher's communicative competence and relational abilities. The prominence of communication skills in the present study aligns closely with the findings of studies emphasizing the importance of effective interpersonal interaction and emotional engagement in educational settings (9, 12). Previous research has shown that communication-oriented teaching environments facilitate students' participation, improve classroom atmosphere, and strengthen learning motivation, all of which are particularly important in subjects requiring interpretation and discussion such as history. Furthermore, phenomenological studies on educational leadership and teacher experiences have similarly identified dialogue, interaction, and collaborative participation as core elements of successful educational practice (8).

Another important finding of this study was the high importance attributed to active and interactive teaching methods, including storytelling, dramatization, role-playing, and project-based learning. Teachers emphasized that Ancient History becomes more meaningful and engaging when historical events are transformed into interactive learning experiences rather than being presented solely through traditional lecture-based instruction. These findings support the growing educational consensus that history teaching should encourage historical imagination, inquiry, and interpretive thinking instead of rote memorization of dates and events. The effectiveness of storytelling and narrative-based instruction identified in this study is consistent with the argument that historical discourse and narrative interpretation can significantly enhance students' critical thinking and engagement in social studies education (1). Similarly, previous investigations into history teachers' instructional practices demonstrated that interactive and document-based teaching strategies contribute to deeper historical understanding and increased student participation (3). Research on the attractiveness of history courses also reported that teachers who use engaging instructional methods, dramatic narration, and contextualized teaching approaches are more successful in stimulating students' curiosity and interest in historical topics (10). The findings of the present study therefore reinforce the notion that active instructional methods are essential for making Ancient History relevant and accessible to secondary school students.

The dimension of educational content also emerged as a highly important component of the proposed instructional model. Teachers emphasized the significance of selecting age-appropriate, engaging, and well-organized content capable of connecting historical phenomena to contemporary realities. This finding reflects the understanding that the quality of educational content strongly influences students' cognitive engagement and historical comprehension. Teachers believed that students are more likely to appreciate and understand Ancient History when historical events are presented in relation to present-day social, political, and cultural issues. This result is compatible with contemporary perspectives on historical thinking, which emphasize contextual interpretation, comparative analysis, and relevance to current realities as key dimensions of effective history education (1, 2). The findings are also supported by studies showing that experiential and contextualized educational approaches improve students' engagement and understanding in social studies and environmental literacy education (14, 15). In this regard, the present study suggests that content organization in Ancient History education should not merely follow chronological order but should also facilitate conceptual understanding and meaningful reflection on the relationship between past and present.

Assessment was identified as another important dimension of the instructional model. Teachers emphasized continuous, creative, multidimensional, and formative assessment methods as more effective than traditional summative evaluation approaches. The emphasis on formative and participatory assessment indicates that teachers perceive evaluation not simply as a mechanism for grading but as an integral component of the learning process itself. These findings correspond with educational research suggesting that formative assessment enhances students' reflective learning, participation, and motivation by providing continuous feedback and opportunities for improvement (6, 7). Teachers in the present study believed that creative

assessment approaches such as project evaluation, participatory tasks, and performance-based activities are particularly appropriate for Ancient History because they allow students to demonstrate analytical understanding rather than memorized information. This finding aligns with modern educational theories that advocate authentic assessment practices capable of evaluating higher-order thinking skills and interpretive competencies. Moreover, the emphasis on multidimensional assessment reflects teachers' recognition of individual differences among students and the need for flexible evaluation methods that account for diverse learning styles and abilities.

The findings related to professional development revealed that teachers considered continuous learning, collaboration with colleagues, participation in training programs, reflective practice, and instructional innovation as essential components of effective history teaching. This result underscores the dynamic nature of teaching competence and indicates that successful history teachers continuously adapt their pedagogical knowledge and instructional strategies in response to educational changes and classroom realities. The importance of reflective and collaborative professional development identified in this study is consistent with previous phenomenological research on teachers' lived experiences and educational leadership (5, 8). Research conducted during the coronavirus period also highlighted the significance of adaptability, self-reflection, and professional resilience in maintaining educational quality under changing conditions (5). Furthermore, post-pandemic educational studies have emphasized the necessity of ongoing teacher training in pedagogical innovation and digital competency development (13). The findings of the present study therefore suggest that effective Ancient History teaching requires not only subject knowledge but also sustained professional growth and openness to pedagogical transformation.

Although educational technology received the lowest mean score among the identified dimensions, it was still evaluated significantly above the average level, indicating that teachers regarded technological integration as an important aspect of contemporary history education. Teachers emphasized the use of digital tools, multimedia resources, videos, virtual environments, and online educational materials as supportive elements capable of enhancing classroom engagement and improving access to historical content. The comparatively lower emphasis on educational technology may reflect disparities in teachers' technological skills, institutional resources, or access to digital infrastructure. Nevertheless, the significance of educational technology identified in the present study is consistent with contemporary educational research highlighting the increasing importance of technological integration in post-pandemic teaching environments (4, 13). Studies examining teachers' experiences in virtual learning environments have similarly shown that technological tools can enhance communication, visualization, and interactive learning when accompanied by appropriate training and institutional support (4). The findings of the present study therefore indicate that educational technology should be viewed as a complementary instructional resource capable of enriching historical learning experiences rather than replacing direct teacher-student interaction.

The confirmatory factor analysis findings demonstrated that the proposed six-dimensional model possessed acceptable structural validity and satisfactory fit indices. All factor loadings were statistically significant and above acceptable thresholds, indicating that the identified dimensions adequately explained the overall construct of effective Ancient History teaching. Communication skills demonstrated the strongest factor loading, further confirming the centrality of interpersonal and interactive competencies in history education. These quantitative findings support the qualitative results obtained from teachers' lived experiences and suggest that the proposed model possesses both conceptual coherence and empirical validity. The satisfactory content validity indices provided by experts additionally confirmed the relevance and clarity of the identified dimensions. Such findings indicate that the proposed instructional model may serve as a practical framework for curriculum planning, teacher training, and instructional improvement in Ancient History education. The integration of experiential,

pedagogical, communicative, and technological dimensions within a unified instructional model represents one of the major strengths of the present study and contributes to the broader literature on teacher-centered educational design.

The results of the present study also have broader implications for educational theory and policy. The findings suggest that effective history teaching cannot be reduced to content transmission alone but instead requires a multidimensional pedagogical approach grounded in interaction, reflection, contextualization, and experiential engagement. The emphasis placed by teachers on communication skills, active learning methods, and reflective professional practice indicates that history education should be conceptualized as a participatory and socially constructed learning process. These findings are compatible with constructivist educational perspectives emphasizing active meaning-making, collaborative inquiry, and dialogic interaction in classroom learning (1, 2). Moreover, the study highlights the value of phenomenological and experience-based research approaches in educational inquiry because such approaches provide insight into the practical realities and implicit knowledge underlying teaching practice. Similar phenomenological studies in various educational contexts have shown that teachers' lived experiences offer valuable information regarding classroom challenges, instructional adaptation, and pedagogical effectiveness (8, 11, 15). Consequently, educational reforms and curriculum development initiatives may benefit substantially from greater attention to teachers' experiential knowledge and classroom realities.

One of the limitations of the present study was that the qualitative and quantitative samples were limited to secondary school teachers in Baghdad, which may reduce the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts and cultural environments. In addition, the study relied primarily on self-reported data obtained through interviews and questionnaires, which may have been influenced by participants' subjective interpretations or social desirability tendencies. Another limitation concerns the cross-sectional nature of the research design, which restricted the possibility of examining long-term changes in teachers' instructional experiences and professional practices. Furthermore, although the study identified major dimensions of effective Ancient History teaching, other contextual factors such as institutional policies, curriculum constraints, and socioeconomic conditions may also influence teaching effectiveness and were not examined comprehensively in the present research.

Future studies are recommended to investigate the applicability of the proposed instructional model in different educational settings and across diverse cultural contexts in order to examine its external validity. Researchers may also conduct longitudinal studies to explore how teachers' instructional experiences and professional competencies evolve over time. Comparative studies between novice and experienced history teachers may provide additional insight into the development of pedagogical expertise in history education. Moreover, future research could investigate the perspectives of students, school administrators, and curriculum specialists regarding the effectiveness of the proposed instructional model. Experimental and intervention-based studies evaluating the impact of active teaching methods, communication-centered instruction, and technology-supported learning on students' historical thinking skills and academic achievement would also contribute significantly to the development of evidence-based history education practices.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study suggest the necessity of designing teacher training programs that emphasize communication skills, interactive instructional methods, and reflective teaching practices in history education. Curriculum planners should incorporate active learning strategies such as storytelling, role-playing, project-based learning, and historical inquiry into Ancient History curricula in order to improve student engagement and historical understanding. Educational policymakers should also provide greater institutional support for teachers' professional development through workshops, collaborative learning communities, and continuous pedagogical training programs. In addition, schools should improve teachers' access to educational technologies and multimedia resources while simultaneously providing training on effective technology integration in history classrooms. Finally, assessment systems in history education should move toward

more formative, multidimensional, and performance-based approaches capable of evaluating students' analytical and interpretive competencies rather than relying exclusively on memorization-oriented examinations.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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