ACTUAL DIFFICULTIES IN ONLINE AND HYBRID HISTORY INSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT. This article examines the current problems and challenges of teaching history in a digital educational environment. The study analyzes the transformation of traditional history teaching methods under the influence of digital technologies, identifies key contradictions between technological capabilities and pedagogical practice, and explores the impact of digitalization on students' historical thinking formation. Based on analysis of international experience and empirical research, the article identifies major challenges including: the problem of information reliability and critical thinking development, the risk of simplifying complex historical phenomena, difficulties in developing chronological thinking in a hypertext environment, ethical issues of using digital resources, and the digital divide problem. The research proposes practical recommendations for overcoming identified problems and effective integration of digital tools into the history teaching process while preserving fundamental pedagogical principles and the specificity of historical education.

Keywords: digital educational environment, history teaching, digital technologies in education, historical thinking, critical analysis of sources, digital literacy, multimedia resources, online learning, educational technologies, digital pedagogy.

1. INTRODUCTION. The 21st century has witnessed an unprecedented transformation of educational systems worldwide, driven primarily by the rapid advancement of information and communication technologies. History education, traditionally reliant on textbooks, primary sources, and teacher-led lectures, is experiencing a fundamental paradigm shift as it adapts to the digital age. This transformation presents both remarkable opportunities and significant challenges that demand careful scholarly attention.

The COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022) accelerated the digital transformation of education, forcing educators globally to rapidly adopt online teaching methods. According to UNESCO data, approximately 1.6 billion students worldwide were affected by school closures, necessitating an immediate transition to digital learning formats. This unprecedented situation revealed both the potential and limitations of digital tools in history education, making the study of associated problems particularly urgent.

Contemporary students, often referred to as "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001), possess fundamentally different cognitive patterns and learning preferences compared to previous generations. They expect information to be visual, interactive, and immediately accessible. Traditional history teaching methods, which emphasize linear narratives and extensive reading, often fail to engage these learners effectively. However, the mere presence of digital technologies does not automatically guarantee improved educational outcomes; rather, it requires thoughtful pedagogical integration.

The digitalization of history education involves more than simply transferring content to electronic formats. It encompasses fundamental changes in how historical knowledge is constructed, transmitted, and assessed. Digital environments offer unprecedented access to primary sources, virtual museum tours, interactive timelines, and collaborative research opportunities. Yet, these same environments pose serious challenges: information overload,

difficulty distinguishing reliable sources from misinformation, fragmented attention spans, and the risk of superficial engagement with complex historical topics.

1.2. Research Problem

Despite the widespread adoption of digital technologies in education, there exists a significant gap between technological capabilities and pedagogical effectiveness in history teaching. Many educators lack adequate training in digital pedagogy, while available digital resources often fail to address the specific epistemic requirements of historical education. Furthermore, the rapid pace of technological change creates difficulties in developing stable, evidence-based practices.

The central research problem addressed in this article concerns the identification, analysis, and potential resolution of key challenges encountered when teaching history in digital educational environments. These challenges affect multiple stakeholders: students struggling to develop critical historical thinking in information-saturated contexts; teachers navigating unfamiliar pedagogical territory with insufficient support; and educational institutions attempting to balance innovation with proven pedagogical principles.

1.3. Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1.   Analyze the transformation of history teaching methods under the influence of digitalization

2.   Identify and systematize current problems encountered in teaching history in digital environments

3.   Examine international experience in addressing these challenges

4.   Propose evidence-based recommendations for effective integration of digital tools in history education

5.   Contribute to the development of digital pedagogy specifically adapted to history teaching

1.4. Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining:

•   Literature review: Analysis of international scholarly publications (2015-2024) on digital history education

•   Comparative analysis: Examination of digital history teaching practices in various countries (USA, UK, Finland, Singapore, Russia, Turkey, Uzbekistan)

•   Case studies: Investigation of specific digital tools and platforms used in history education

•   Empirical research: Survey data from 150 history teachers and 500 students across secondary schools

- Expert interviews: Consultations with 20 educational technology specialists and history educators

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: HISTORY EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

2.1. The Nature of Historical Knowledge and Digital Affordances

Historical education possesses unique epistemic characteristics that distinguish it from other disciplines. Unlike mathematics or natural sciences, history deals with interpretations of past events based on incomplete and often contested evidence. Historical thinking involves source analysis, contextualization, perspective-taking, and understanding causation and change over time (Wineburg, 2001; Seixas & Morton, 2013).

Digital technologies offer several affordances particularly relevant to history education:

Enhanced Access to Primary Sources: Digital archives such as the Library of Congress Digital Collections, Europeana, and national digital repositories provide unprecedented access to historical documents, photographs, newspapers, and artifacts. Students can directly engage with materials previously accessible only to professional historians.

Multimedia Representations: Digital platforms enable integration of text, images, video, audio, and interactive elements, allowing for richer representations of historical events. For example, witness testimonies can be presented through video interviews, historical battles through 3D reconstructions, and social changes through interactive data visualizations.

Collaborative Learning Opportunities: Digital environments facilitate collaborative historical inquiry through shared document editing, online discussion forums, and joint research projects, transcending geographical boundaries.

Interactive Timelines and Spatial Analysis: Tools like TimelineJS, Tiki-Toki, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) enable dynamic visualization of chronological developments and spatial patterns in history.

However, these affordances must be balanced against the specific cognitive demands of historical thinking. As Lee and Shemilt (2011) argue, historical understanding requires "discipline-specific literacy practices" that may not automatically develop through general digital literacy.

2.2. Theoretical Approaches to Digital History Education

Several theoretical frameworks inform contemporary approaches to teaching history in digital environments:

Constructivist Learning Theory: Digital tools can support constructivist pedagogy by enabling students to actively construct historical knowledge through inquiry, exploration, and problem-solving rather than passively receiving information (Bruner, 1960; Vygotsky, 1978).

Connectivism: Siemens (2005) proposes that in the digital age, learning involves creating connections within distributed information networks. This theory is particularly relevant to history education, where understanding requires connecting multiple sources, perspectives, and contexts.

TPACK Framework: The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge model (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) emphasizes that effective digital teaching requires integration of three knowledge domains: technology, pedagogy, and content. For history teachers, this means understanding not just how to use digital tools, but how these tools can specifically enhance historical learning.

Digital Historical Thinking: Scholars like Mills (2018) and Breakstone et al. (2018) have developed frameworks specifically for historical thinking in digital contexts, emphasizing skills such as lateral reading, click restraint, and digital source evaluation.

2.3. The Digital Transformation of History Curricula

The integration of digital technologies has prompted reconsideration of history curriculum goals and methods globally:

United States: The Library of Congress's Teaching with Primary Sources program and the Stanford History Education Group's Reading Like a Historian curriculum emphasize using digitized primary sources and developing critical evaluation skills.

United Kingdom: The Historical Association promotes "digital history" approaches, encouraging use of online archives, virtual reality historical reconstructions, and digital storytelling projects.

Finland: Known for educational innovation, Finnish schools integrate "phenomenon-based learning" with digital tools, allowing students to investigate historical topics through interdisciplinary, technology-enhanced projects.

Singapore: The Ministry of Education's "Historical Inquiry" approach combines traditional source analysis with digital research skills, emphasizing both historical and media literacy.

Despite these innovations, researchers note persistent challenges in moving from technology-enhanced teaching activities to fundamental transformation of historical learning (Hicks, 2018; Steeves, 2020).

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