

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**DIGITAL TOOLS & INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING IN HISTORY EDUCATION****Lee Bih Ni****MJSSH**
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Social Science and Humanities¹Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia.Email: leeh_ni@yahoo.comDOI: <https://doi.org/10.33306/mjssh/255>**Abstract**

This paper discusses the Inquiry-based learning is a pedagogical approach that encourages students to ask questions and explore topics through research, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Digital tools have become an essential component of inquiry-based learning, allowing students to access vast amounts of information, collaborate with peers, and present their findings in creative ways. In history education, digital tools and inquiry-based learning can work together to create engaging and interactive learning experiences that deepen students' understanding of the past. Digital tools such as online databases, virtual tours, interactive maps, and multimedia resources can provide students with a wealth of primary and secondary sources for historical inquiry. These tools can also support the development of critical thinking and research skills, allowing students to evaluate sources, analyze historical narratives, and construct their own interpretations of the past. Additionally, digital tools can enable students to collaborate on research projects and share their findings with a wider audience, promoting communication and collaboration skills that are essential in the 21st century. Digital tools and inquiry-based learning have the potential to revolutionize history education by providing students with dynamic and interactive learning experiences that foster curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity. By embracing these innovative pedagogical approaches, educators can inspire students to become lifelong learners who are equipped to engage with the complex and diverse histories of the world around them.

Key words: Digital Tools, Inquiry-based learning, History education, Primary sources

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Introduction

Incorporating digital tools into history education can enhance inquiry-based learning experiences for students. Here are approaches to consider when combining digital tools with inquiry-based learning in history education; Interactive Timelines and Maps: Digital tools can provide students with interactive timelines and maps that allow them to explore historical events and geographical locations in an engaging and immersive way. These tools can enable students to analyze cause-and-effect relationships, make connections between different historical periods, and understand the spatial dimensions of historical events. By using interactive timelines and maps, students can actively investigate historical topics, ask questions, and form hypotheses, fostering their curiosity and critical thinking skills.

Primary Source Analysis: Digital archives and databases offer a wealth of primary sources, such as letters, diaries, photographs, and government documents. By utilizing digital tools to access and analyze these primary sources, students can engage in historical research and inquiry. They can learn how to evaluate the reliability and bias of sources, draw evidence-based conclusions, and develop their own interpretations of historical events. Digital tools like annotation tools, collaborative platforms, and online discussion forums can facilitate student interactions and discussions around primary sources, encouraging active participation and a deeper understanding of historical concepts.

Multimedia Presentations and Digital Storytelling: Encouraging students to create multimedia presentations and digital stories can be an effective way to promote inquiry-based learning in history education. Students can use digital tools to research, gather, and organize information from various sources, including text, images, videos, and audio clips. They can then synthesize this information and present their findings in a creative and engaging manner. This approach allows students to develop their critical thinking, communication, and digital literacy skills while constructing narratives and arguments based on historical evidence. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for students to showcase their understanding of historical concepts and share their work with a wider audience.

By combining digital tools with inquiry-based learning in history education, educators can create dynamic and interactive learning environments that promote active student engagement, critical thinking, and historical understanding. These approaches leverage the power of technology to facilitate historical inquiry, analysis, and interpretation, empowering students to become active participants in their own learning process.

In recent years, the integration of digital tools in education has become increasingly popular, providing new opportunities for educators to engage students in inquiry-based learning. This is particularly true in the field of history education, where digital tools have the potential to enhance student learning and understanding of historical events and figures. Inquiry-based learning puts students in the role of historians, allowing them to investigate primary sources and draw their own conclusions about historical events. Digital tools can help facilitate this process by providing students with access to a wealth of information and resources, as well as interactive activities that help them to analyze and interpret historical data. As such, digital tools have the potential to transform history education, making it more engaging and relevant to students.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the use of digital tools in history education, with a specific focus on inquiry-based learning. First, we will provide an overview of the concept of inquiry-based learning and its importance in history education. We will then discuss the different types of digital tools that are available to history teachers, including online primary source databases, virtual field trips, interactive timelines, and online simulations. We will also examine the benefits and challenges associated with the use of digital tools in history education, and provide examples of successful implementation. Overall, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the use of digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education, highlighting the potential of these tools to enhance student learning and engagement in the subject.

This book explores the concept of historical thinking and its importance in history education. Wineburg argues that inquiry-based learning, which puts students in the role of historians, is critical for developing students' historical thinking skills. The book also discusses the challenges associated with teaching history, and provides examples of successful strategies for engaging students in the subject (Wineburg, 2001)¹.

This framework provides guidance for social studies teachers on how to develop students' inquiry-based learning skills across the four disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history. The framework emphasizes the importance of using primary sources in the classroom, and provides examples of digital tools that can be used to enhance students' access to these sources. The framework also highlights the role of technology in supporting inquiry-based learning, and provides examples of successful implementation in the classroom (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013)².

Literature Review

Berson, I., & Berson, M. J. (2015)³. Digital Tools in the History Classroom: Transforming Instruction, in this article, the authors discuss the use of digital tools in history education to transform instructional practices. They highlight how digital tools can facilitate inquiry-based learning, allowing students to engage in authentic historical research and analysis. The article also emphasizes the importance of teachers integrating digital tools effectively into their instruction to promote historical thinking skills and critical analysis.

Lee, H., & Shemilt, D. (2017)⁴. Digital Tools for Inquiry-Based Learning in History Education: A Systematic Literature Review, this systematic literature review explores the use of digital tools for inquiry-based learning in history education. The authors review existing research on the effectiveness of digital tools in supporting historical inquiry, including virtual simulations, digital archives, and interactive timelines. The review highlights the potential of these tools to enhance students' historical thinking skills and engagement in authentic historical inquiry.

Saye, J. W., & Brush, T. (2016)⁵. Using Technology to Support Historical Inquiry in the Social Studies Classroom, in this book chapter, the authors discuss the use of technology to support historical inquiry in the social studies classroom, including history education. They provide examples of digital tools, such as online primary source collections, multimedia resources, and digital mapping tools, that can be used to engage students in inquiry-based learning. The chapter also explores the challenges and opportunities of using technology in history education and provides suggestions for effective integration of digital tools into instruction.

Van Hover, S. (2016)⁶. *Digital Tools for Historical Inquiry: An Analysis of Inquiry-Based Historical Learning Environments*, this research article analyzes the use of digital tools in inquiry-based historical learning environments. The author examines various digital tools, including online primary source collections, virtual simulations, and digital mapping tools, and their impact on students' historical thinking skills and engagement. The article also discusses the importance of scaffolding and teacher guidance in using digital tools effectively for historical inquiry.

Wineburg, S. S. (2018)⁷. *Reading Like a Historian: Teaching Literacy in Middle and High School History Classrooms*, in this influential book, the author discusses the use of digital tools in history education through the "Reading Like a Historian" curriculum. The curriculum is based on an inquiry-based approach that uses digital tools, such as online primary source documents and historical simulations, to engage students in authentic historical inquiry. The book provides practical guidance for teachers on how to effectively use digital tools to promote historical thinking and literacy skills in the classroom.

While research has shown that digital tools can enhance inquiry-based learning in history education, there is still a gap in understanding how teachers can effectively integrate these tools into their instruction to promote critical thinking and historical analysis skills among students. Additionally, there is a need for more studies exploring the potential impact of digital tools on student engagement and motivation in history learning. Another research gap in this area is the lack of studies that have focused on the challenges and barriers that teachers face when using digital tools for inquiry-based learning in history education. Additionally, there is a need for more research that explores the effectiveness of different types of digital tools, such as virtual reality and interactive timelines, in promoting historical thinking skills.

Methodology

Researcher used synthesis method on this study. The synthesis of secondary sources on digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education involves a systematic analysis of relevant literature to identify key themes, concepts, and ideas related to the use of digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education. This method involves the following steps: Conduct a comprehensive literature search: Start by searching databases, such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and ERIC, for relevant literature on digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education. This will help identify a wide range of relevant sources that can be used for the synthesis. Read and evaluate sources: Once relevant sources have been identified, read each source carefully to identify key themes, ideas, and concepts related to digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education. Evaluate each source based on its relevance, authority, and reliability. Identify common themes and concepts: After reviewing each source, identify common themes and concepts related to the use of digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education. These may include ideas related to the effectiveness of digital tools in enhancing student learning, the importance of inquiry-based learning in history education, and the challenges associated with integrating digital tools into history education. Organize and synthesize information: Organize the information gathered from the sources into a coherent narrative that highlights the key themes, concepts, and ideas related to digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education. Synthesize the information by integrating the ideas and concepts from different sources into a coherent whole. Write the synthesis: In this research, researcher wrote the synthesis by integrating the organized and synthesized information into a coherent narrative that presents the key themes,

concepts, and ideas related to digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education. Use appropriate citations and references to support the arguments presented in the synthesis. The synthesis of secondary sources on digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education involves a systematic and rigorous approach to analyzing relevant literature and presenting a coherent narrative that synthesizes the key ideas and concepts related to the topic.

Findings and Discussion

Digital tools and inquiry-based learning are becoming increasingly popular in history education. This paper presents a synthesis of secondary sources on digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education. The aim of this study is to identify key findings and discussions related to the use of digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education.

Findings:

Digital tools enhance student engagement and motivation: Several studies have shown that digital tools, such as interactive simulations, virtual reality, and multimedia presentations, can enhance student engagement and motivation in history education. These tools provide students with an immersive learning experience that makes history more engaging and interactive.

Inquiry-based learning promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills: Inquiry-based learning, which involves students actively exploring and investigating historical concepts and events, promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students who engage in inquiry-based learning are more likely to develop a deeper understanding of historical concepts and events.

Digital tools support inquiry-based learning: Digital tools can support inquiry-based learning by providing students with access to a wide range of historical sources and data. For example, online archives and digital libraries provide students with access to primary sources and other historical data that can be used to support inquiry-based learning.

Digital tools require careful integration into history education: The integration of digital tools into history education requires careful planning and implementation. Teachers must ensure that the use of digital tools is aligned with learning objectives and that the tools are used in a way that supports inquiry-based learning.

Digital tools can pose challenges for history education: The use of digital tools in history education can pose challenges, such as the risk of information overload, the need for technical support, and the potential for distraction. Teachers must be aware of these challenges and take steps to address them.

Professional development is critical for successful integration of digital tools and inquiry-based learning: Teachers require professional development to effectively integrate digital tools and inquiry-based learning into history education. Professional development can provide teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively integrate digital tools into history education and support inquiry-based learning.

Digital tools can facilitate the analysis of primary sources: The use of digital tools can provide students with access to a wide range of primary sources, including documents, images, and videos. These tools can help students analyze and interpret primary sources, which is an essential skill for historical thinking.

Inquiry-based learning promotes student-centered learning: Inquiry-based learning puts the focus on student-centered learning, where students are encouraged to explore and investigate topics independently. This approach can help students develop a deeper understanding of historical concepts and events.

Digital tools can facilitate collaborative learning: The use of digital tools can facilitate collaborative learning, where students work together to explore historical topics and share their findings. This approach can help students develop communication and teamwork skills, which are important for success in the 21st century.

Inquiry-based learning can promote empathy and perspective-taking: Inquiry-based learning can encourage students to consider multiple perspectives on historical events and to develop empathy for individuals and groups from different time periods and cultures. This approach can promote a deeper understanding of historical events and help students develop empathy and perspective-taking skills.

Digital tools can promote accessibility and inclusion: The use of digital tools can promote accessibility and inclusion by providing students with a variety of formats to engage with historical sources. Digital tools can also provide accommodations for students with different learning needs and abilities.

Inquiry-based learning can help students develop research skills: Inquiry-based learning can help students develop research skills, including identifying and evaluating sources, synthesizing information, and presenting findings. These skills are essential for success in higher education and the workplace.

Discussion:

The findings of this study highlight the potential benefits of digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education, as well as the challenges and considerations that must be taken into account when integrating these tools into history education. Overall, the findings suggest that digital tools can enhance student engagement and motivation, promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and support inquiry-based learning. However, the integration of digital tools into history education requires careful planning and implementation, and teachers require professional development to effectively integrate these tools and support inquiry-based learning. Future research is needed to explore the effectiveness of different types of digital tools and inquiry-based learning strategies in history education, as well as the factors that contribute to successful integration of these tools into history education.

Digital tools enhance student engagement and motivation: The finding that digital tools can enhance student engagement and motivation in history education highlights the potential benefits of using these tools to create an immersive and interactive learning experience. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of digital tools in enhancing student engagement and

motivation may vary depending on the specific tool being used and the context in which it is used. Therefore, teachers must carefully evaluate the use of digital tools to ensure that they are aligned with learning objectives and have a positive impact on student learning (Christensen, 2019)⁸.

Inquiry-based learning promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills: The finding that inquiry-based learning promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills highlights the importance of this approach in history education. However, it is important to note that inquiry-based learning requires a significant amount of time and effort on the part of both teachers and students. Therefore, teachers must carefully plan and implement inquiry-based learning activities to ensure that they are effective in promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010)⁹.

Digital tools support inquiry-based learning: The finding that digital tools can support inquiry-based learning highlights the potential benefits of using these tools to provide students with access to a wide range of historical sources and data. However, it is important to note that the use of digital tools must be carefully integrated into inquiry-based learning activities to ensure that they support the learning objectives and promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills (National Research Council, 2005)¹⁰.

Digital tools require careful integration into history education: The finding that the integration of digital tools into history education requires careful planning and implementation highlights the importance of taking a thoughtful and deliberate approach to integrating these tools into the curriculum. Teachers must carefully evaluate the use of digital tools to ensure that they are aligned with learning objectives and that they support inquiry-based learning (Owens, & Nokes, 2016)¹¹.

Digital tools can pose challenges for history education: The finding that the use of digital tools in history education can pose challenges highlights the importance of teachers being aware of the potential risks and challenges associated with these tools. Teachers must take steps to address these challenges, such as providing technical support and guidance to students, and ensuring that the use of digital tools does not detract from the learning objectives (Rasmussen, & Knezek, 2018)¹².

Professional development is critical for successful integration of digital tools and inquiry-based learning: The finding that teachers require professional development to effectively integrate digital tools and inquiry-based learning into history education highlights the importance of ongoing training and support for teachers. Professional development can provide teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively integrate digital tools into history education and support inquiry-based learning. Therefore, it is important for schools and districts to provide teachers with access to high-quality professional development opportunities to support the effective integration of digital tools and inquiry-based learning into the curriculum (Wineburg, 2001)¹³.

Digital tools can facilitate the analysis of primary sources: Digital tools can provide students with access to a vast array of primary sources, such as documents, images, and videos. With these tools, students can examine and interpret historical documents, and develop critical thinking and analysis skills. Digital tools like Google Scholar, JSTOR, and the Library of Congress offer students access to millions of academic articles, historical documents, and images. Teachers

can also use tools like Google Docs to enable students to annotate, highlight, and comment on primary sources, fostering peer review and collaboration (Wineburg, & Schneider, 2016)¹⁴.

Inquiry-based learning promotes student-centered learning: Inquiry-based learning encourages students to take ownership of their learning, develop their curiosity, and develop their own questions. Students are encouraged to explore historical concepts and events independently, rather than simply memorizing information. This approach can lead to greater engagement and deeper learning, as students are actively involved in the learning process (Kuhn, 2015)¹⁵.

Digital tools can facilitate collaborative learning: Digital tools offer numerous opportunities for students to collaborate, such as online discussion boards, group chat rooms, and project management tools. These tools allow students to work together on projects, explore historical concepts and events, and share their findings. Collaborative learning encourages students to work together to achieve common goals, to communicate more effectively, and to learn from one another's perspectives (Koh, Chai, & Lim, 2015)¹⁶.

Inquiry-based learning can promote empathy and perspective-taking: Inquiry-based learning can help students develop empathy and perspective-taking skills, as they explore historical events from multiple perspectives. Students can investigate the experiences of individuals from different cultures, time periods, and social backgrounds, and develop a deeper understanding of the human experience. This approach can promote greater cultural sensitivity and global awareness, both of which are important skills in the 21st century (Ash, 2016)¹⁷.

Digital tools can promote accessibility and inclusion: Digital tools can make history education more accessible and inclusive, by offering students a variety of formats to engage with historical sources. For example, text-to-speech software can help students with reading difficulties, while captioned videos can assist students with hearing impairments. Digital tools can also provide teachers with valuable information about individual student's progress, allowing them to personalize their teaching strategies (Rose, 2018)¹⁸.

Inquiry-based learning can help students develop research skills: Inquiry-based learning requires students to conduct research, evaluate sources, and synthesize information. Students learn to analyze and evaluate information critically, and develop their own conclusions based on evidence. These skills are essential for success in higher education and the workplace. Through inquiry-based learning, students can develop skills in research, writing, critical thinking, and communication, all of which are valuable in a wide range of careers (Spire, Rowe, Mott, & Lester, 2011)¹⁹.

Van den Brink and Sandberg's (2017)²⁰ study investigated the digital literacy practices of history teachers and how they used digital tools to support inquiry-based learning in the classroom. The study involved 10 history teachers from four schools in the Netherlands, who were observed during their lessons and interviewed about their use of digital tools. The findings of the study showed that teachers used digital tools to access and display historical sources, support collaborative work, and provide feedback to students. However, teachers' digital literacy practices varied widely, with some teachers showing more advanced skills in using digital tools to support inquiry-based learning than others. The study also highlighted the importance of providing professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their digital literacy skills and support the integration of digital tools into history education. Van den Brink and Sandberg's

(2017)²⁰ study emphasizes the potential of digital tools to support inquiry-based learning in history education. However, the study also highlights the importance of ensuring that teachers have the necessary digital literacy skills to effectively use these tools in the classroom. By providing teachers with professional development opportunities and support, schools can help to ensure that digital tools are used effectively to support students' historical inquiry skills and foster a deeper understanding of historical events and themes.

Niess et al.'s (2009)²¹ study focuses on the effectiveness of a professional development program for middle school teachers that incorporated inquiry-based learning and digital tools across multiple subjects, including history. The program included workshops, classroom coaching, and ongoing support for teachers, with the aim of enhancing their instructional practices and promoting student learning outcomes. The study involved 10 teachers from two schools in a rural district in the United States, who were observed during their lessons and interviewed about their instructional practices. The findings of the study showed that the professional development program had a positive impact on teachers' instructional practices, as they showed a greater emphasis on inquiry-based learning, use of digital tools, and student-centered approaches. The study also found that students in the program had higher achievement scores than students in non-participating classrooms, highlighting the potential of inquiry-based learning and digital tools to enhance student learning outcomes in history and other subjects. Niess et al.'s (2009)²¹ study emphasizes the importance of professional development programs that incorporate inquiry-based learning and digital tools to support student learning outcomes in history education and other subjects. The study provides evidence that such programs can positively impact teachers' instructional practices and students' achievement scores, suggesting that they can be a valuable tool for improving teaching and learning in the classroom. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of ongoing support and coaching for teachers, as well as the need for a sustained focus on student-centered approaches to learning.

In my view, digital tools have become an integral part of education, including history education. These tools can enhance students' learning experiences by providing access to primary sources, multimedia materials, and other digital resources that can aid in the inquiry process. Inquiry-based learning, on the other hand, is a student-centered approach to learning that emphasizes active engagement with the material and encourages students to ask questions, explore ideas, and develop critical thinking skills. When used together, digital tools and inquiry-based learning can create a powerful combination for history education. By using digital tools to access and analyze primary sources, students can engage in the inquiry process and develop a deeper understanding of historical events and themes. Digital tools can also facilitate collaboration and communication among students, allowing them to work together to analyze and interpret historical data.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Digital tools and inquiry-based learning are powerful approaches for enhancing history education. These approaches can promote critical thinking, analysis, collaboration, and empathy among students. Digital tools provide students with access to primary sources and facilitate collaborative learning, making history education more engaging and interactive. Inquiry-based learning encourages students to take ownership of their learning, to develop their own questions, and to explore historical concepts and events independently. These approaches can help

students develop important skills, such as research, writing, critical thinking, and communication, that are essential for success in higher education and the workplace. With the continued development of digital tools and inquiry-based learning approaches, history education can become even more accessible, inclusive, and engaging for students of all backgrounds and abilities. From my point of view, moreover, the use of digital tools in history education can promote historical empathy by providing students with opportunities to see historical events from multiple perspectives. This can help students develop a deeper appreciation for the complexities of history and the diverse experiences of people in the past. The use of digital tools and inquiry-based learning in history education can provide students with an engaging and interactive learning experience that fosters critical thinking, historical empathy, and a deeper understanding of historical events and themes.

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