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Evaluating History Learning in the Era of Digital Disruption: Inclusivity, Access Gaps, and Integrity of Online Assessments

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Abstract

Digital disruption has changed the way history is taught, accessed, and evaluated. This change opens up opportunities for history learning that is richer in resources, more flexible, and closer to students' digital literacy practices, but also presents new issues related to inclusivity, access gaps, and the integrity of online assessments. This article aims to analyze the evaluation of historical learning in the era of digital disruption by emphasizing these three main issues. This article uses a qualitative literature study approach by examining policy reports and cutting-edge journal articles on educational technology, history learning, and academic integrity. The results of the study show that digital technology can expand access to archives, primary sources, multimedia, and formative assessments, but its effectiveness is highly dependent on the availability of devices, connectivity, teacher readiness, inclusive learning design, and regulation of the use of technology including artificial intelligence. In the context of historical learning, online assessments that only emphasize memorization tend to be vulnerable to plagiarism, collusion, and unethical use of AI. Therefore, the evaluation of history learning needs to shift towards an authentic, multimodal, process-based, and diverse model of students. Strategies such as primary source analysis, digital projects, written reflections, oral presentations, and continuous feedback are more promising for maintaining the quality of learning as well as academic integrity.

Keywords: history learning, digital disruption, inclusivity, access gap

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Introduction

Digital disruption has fundamentally changed the educational landscape. Technology no longer functions only as an additional tool, but also determines how students access knowledge, interact with materials, communicate with teachers, and demonstrate learning outcomes. UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring report confirms that technology can expand access, improve quality, and support education system management, but these benefits are only achieved if access to technology, governance, and teacher readiness are adequately met (UNESCO, 2023). In the context of Southeast Asia, the variation of digital resources, infrastructure, and policies makes the impact of technology in education highly uneven (Global Education Monitoring Report Team & SEAMEO, 2023).

In the subject of history, digital disruption presents a huge opportunity. Digital archives, virtual museums, documentary videos, interactive maps, learning platforms, and online primary resources can enrich students' learning experiences. History learning is no longer limited to textbooks and one-way lectures, but can develop into a process of tracing evidence, interpreting events, and forming a more reflective historical consciousness. Research on the use of online platforms in historical learning shows that technology can increase learning motivation, participation, and variation in learning strategies if designed appropriately (Malysheva et al., 2022).

However, digital transformation in history learning cannot be understood solely as media modernization. The character of history subjects requires learners to interpret evidence, understand context, assess cause and effect, and build source-based arguments. Therefore, the evaluation of history learning is not enough if only the conventional exam is moved to an online format. Evaluation needs to ensure that technology really supports historical thinking skills, not just accelerating the distribution of questions or beautifying the appearance of the material (Ofianto et al., 2022; Birsyada et al., 2025).

The main challenge arises when the digitalization of education runs faster than the readiness of the system. Problems of device access, network stability, digital literacy, and institutional support make the learning experience of students different. In the same space, some students can make productive use of digital archives, interactive videos, and AI, while others are still struggling with internet quota, devices with their families, or limited accessibility. At the same time, online assessments raise serious issues related to plagiarism, answer sharing,

impersonation, and the use of generative AI that are difficult to detect (Holden et al., 2021; Surahman & Wang, 2022; Bittle & El-Gayar, 2025).

Departing from these issues, this article aims to analyze the evaluation of history learning in the era of digital disruption by highlighting three interrelated dimensions, namely inclusivity, access gap, and integrity of online assessments. This focus is important because the quality of evaluation is determined not only by the sophistication of the platform, but also by the fairness of access, the significance of the assignment, and the credibility of the learning evidence generated by students.

Discussion

Disruption Digital and the Transformation of History Learning

History learning in the digital era has shifted from an information transmission orientation to a more investigative learning experience. The presence of digital archives and online historical sources allows students to trace historical evidence more directly. Articles on digital history and archives show that the use of digital history resources has the potential to strengthen real-world and real-time learning experiences, although its implementation is still constrained by technical and pedagogical readiness in Indonesia (Labibatussolihah et al., 2022). This means that technology should be used to deepen the reading of sources and context, rather than simply replacing whiteboards with screens.

In other research, integrating technology into history curricula has been shown to improve student participation, content understanding, and learning fit with 21st century demands when designed contextually and adaptively (Birsyada et al., 2025). Thus, the evaluation of history learning in the digital era must be directed at the ability to interpret sources, compare perspectives, formulate arguments, and reflect on the relationship between the past and the present. Memorization-based objective exams can still be used on a limited basis, but they must not dominate the entire evaluation system.

Inclusivity in Digital History Assessment

Inclusivity in the evaluation of history learning means that each learner has a fair opportunity to understand the assignment, access resources, express knowledge, and receive feedback that suits his or her needs. The UNESCO study confirms that technology can help reach previously marginalized learning groups, but technology design can also be detrimental

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if it does not take into account the diverse user conditions (UNESCO, 2023). In the context of inclusive education, adaptive technologies can help personalize learning, reduce barriers to participation, and provide a variety of pathways to material representation (Navas-Bonilla et al., 2025).

For the study of history, the principle of inclusivity demands an assessment that is not only technically fair, but also epistemicly fair. Materials and assignments need to make room for the diversity of social experiences, cultural backgrounds, and historical positions of students. For example, an analysis of local history, community history, or regional archives can be a more meaningful form of evaluation than a task that is too far removed from the student's reality. Inclusivity also means providing alternative forms of response, such as essays, concept maps, audio presentations, explainer videos, or digital posters, so that students with different learning styles and needs can still show their competency achievements optimally.

Access Gaps and Unequal Learning Experiences

Access gaps are the most real challenge in digitizing the evaluation of historical learning. Not all learners have the same personal devices, stable internet connections, conducive learning spaces, or digital skills. Ikebuchi (2023) emphasized that the issue of EDI (equity, diversity, inclusion) in online learning is not only related to technology, but also concerns pedagogy, flexibility, and institutional support. At the regional level, the Southeast Asia report shows that variations in infrastructure and resources between countries and between schools make the implementation of education technology very uneven (Global Education Monitoring Report Team & SEAMEO, 2023).

In history learning, access gaps can have a more serious impact because many digital activities rely on large bandwidth, such as videos, virtual tours, or online archive access. If the evaluation is prepared with the assumption that all learners have ideal digital conditions, then the assessment becomes biased towards the economically and geographically more fortunate groups. Therefore, teachers need to implement a multi-layered evaluation design: providing a low-bandwidth version, downloadable resources, limited offline work options, flexible deadlines, and simple, transparent instructions. Evaluation fairness in the digital era is not just about the same standards, but about equal opportunities to achieve those standards.

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Integrity of Online Assessment in History Learning

The issue of academic integrity in online assessments has become more complex after the widespread use of generative AI. Holden et al. (2021) explained that academic dishonesty in online assessments can appear in the form of plagiarism, collusion, unauthorized use of aids, and violations of assessment rules due to weak assignment design. Surahman and Wang (2022) also show that fraud prevention cannot rely solely on technological oversight, but must be built through trustworthy assessment design, clear policies, and a culture of integrity.

In history learning, the risk of cheating increases when the task demands only the reproduction of information that is easy to find on the internet or generated by AI. In contrast, assessments that ask students to analyze specific primary sources, compare two historical interpretations, frame arguments with local evidence, or defend their findings through oral presentations will be more difficult to falsify. Studies of academic integrity in the AI era affirm that artificial intelligence technology can help the learning process, but it also opens up space for ghostwriting, argument fabrication, and automated use that obscures the intellectual property of students' work if not ethically regulated (Bittle & El-Gayar, 2025).

Therefore, the evaluation of history learning in the digital era needs to shift the focus from just fraud detection to a more authentic and verified assessment design. Proof of learning should be built gradually through outlines, source notes, analysis drafts, revisions, process reflections, and brief presentations. In this way, teachers not only assess the final product, but also the students' thought footprint.

Adaptive Strategies for Evaluating History Learning

The adaptive history learning evaluation model in the era of digital disruption relies on at least five principles. First, the assessment must be authentic, i.e. assess historical thinking skills in tasks that resemble historical intellectual practice. Second, the assessment must be multimodal in order to provide a wider space for representation. Third, assessments must be inclusive with accessibility, flexibility, and differentiation support in mind. Fourth, assessments must be transparent through rubrics, rules for the use of AI, and clear academic ethical expectations. Fifth, assessment must be continuous through a combination of diagnostic, formative, and summative.

In practice, history teachers can combine document analysis, local case studies, digital exhibition projects, curated mini-archives, reflective journals, source-based open quizzes, brief

synchronous presentations, and interviews or viva to verify understanding. The use of primary sources in online history learning has been shown to increase engagement and retention when learners are directed to interact directly with historical evidence, rather than just reading material summaries (Fahruddin & Saefudin, 2025). In addition, the development of historical thinking assessment instruments shows that cause-and-effect skills and historical reasoning can be assessed more validly through clear indicators and structured rubrics (Ofianto et al., 2022).

Thus, technology should be placed as an ecosystem supporting evaluation, not as the only solution. Digital platforms are useful for material distribution, assignment collection, feedback, learning analytics, and process documentation. However, the quality of the evaluation is still determined by the quality of the assignment, the sensitivity of the teacher to the diversity of students, and the consistency of the institution in building a culture of academic integrity.

Conclusion

The evaluation of historical learning in the era of digital disruption can no longer rely on the logic of conventional assessments that are simply moved to the online space. Technology does expand access to historical sources, open up more interactive learning opportunities, and allow assessments to take place more flexibly. However, without serious attention to inclusivity, access gaps, and academic integrity, digitalization can actually widen inequality and reduce the credibility of learning outcomes. Therefore, the evaluation of historical learning needs to be designed in an adaptive, authentic, and multimodal manner by prioritizing source analysis, historical reasoning, process evidence, continuous feedback, and ethical policies on the use of technology and AI. This approach is not only fairer to diverse learners, but also more in line with the nature of history as a discipline that demands interpretation, argumentation, and intellectual responsibility.

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