



ORIGINAL PAPER

Artificial Intelligence and the Reconfiguration of History Learning: An Interdisciplinary Analysis from the Perspective of Educational Sciences and Behavioral Anthropology

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Abstract:

This article proposes a new approach in learning and teaching history: the use of artificial intelligence. The novelty of this proposal resides in the fulfillment of the gap between the way of how the new generation thinks versus how the old ones do. It is essential to find a workable approach in sharing information in an adequate way to the new generation. And because the presence of AI cannot be denied, we need two things: to teach the new generation how to use it constructively in order not to lose their critical thinking or the development of IQ and at the same time to remap the informational transfer. This article highlights AI's potential to counter narrative biases, support critical source analysis, and generate innovative narrative forms for studying history. The use of AI in history education does not substitute historiographical work, but amplifies it and reorients it towards reflective, participatory, and interdisciplinary learning.

Keywords: *History Learning and AI, Artificial Intelligence in Education, Behavioral Anthropology of Learning, AI-Mediated Knowledge Construction, Human–AI Interaction in Learning.*

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1. Introduction

The premise from which we must start is that we cannot disconnect the new generation from the reality they live in, which is in line with new technological developments. From the use of social media to the use of AI, the new generation grows, develops, and learns to perceive and know the surrounding world in a way that differs from previous generations. This is why technical progress must be properly integrated, not isolated or dismissed. Thus, I consider it fundamental that we learn to use AI efficiently and beneficially, so that children's potential grows through this use, rather than being diminished.

In the pedagogy of history, the traditional paradigm—centered on the transmission of information—faces evident limits: information overload, students' difficulty in connecting events to one another, lack of critical thinking, and the perception of history as a rigid and irrelevant subject. And this was a problem long before the arise of AI technology. At least in Romanian Educational system, most of the children rejected this discipline due to the fact that they had to learn by heart dates and names without understanding how these may help them in every day life (Osiac, 2018). AI has the potential to change this perception by transforming history into an interactive, visual, narrative, and analytical space.

What we must therefore determine is how AI can support the learning of history in a way that is at once rigorous, critical, and accessible, while also being adapted to the configuration of new social and technological realities.

2. Theoretical Foundations: History, Education, and Technology

Despite the common perception that history is a static collection of data, events, and timelines, within contemporary sciences it is understood as a profound interpretive discipline situated at the intersection of source analysis, hermeneutics, and social theory. As stated before, many students distance themselves from the study of history based on the idea that it is merely a string of dates and events whose relevance they could not identify in everyday practice. Yet the historian—and history in general—does not limit itself to inventorying facts, but constructs explanations by critically evaluating sources, comparing divergent perspectives, examining multiple causalities, and analyzing power relations that shape both events and the ways in which they are recorded. In this sense, history is a process of interpretation in which raw data gains meaning through contextualization and critical dialogue.

Therefore, any technology, including artificial intelligence, that interacts with the discipline must respect this interpretive and dialogical character, avoiding the illusion of algorithmic objectivity. AI can support historical analysis only if it is integrated within an epistemological framework that recognizes the plurality of interpretations, the limits of sources, and the essential role of human reflection in the construction of historical knowledge (Santamaria-Velasco et al., 2025). Thus, history remains not only a study of the past, but an ongoing interpretive process that demands critical thinking and hermeneutic sensitivity.

The constructivist paradigm, consolidated through the contributions of Piaget and Vygotsky (Taber, 2024) and subsequently extended through socio-constructivism and connectivism, maintains that learning is not a process of passive information transfer, but

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an active construction of meaning achieved through interaction, reflection, and social negotiation. In history education, AI supports constructivist learning by enabling students to actively reconstruct the past through inquiry, collaboration, and personalized exploration, transforming them from passive recipients into active agents of historical understanding (Bazanis et al., 2025).

Within contemporary history education, artificial intelligence can be understood not merely as a simple technological tool but as an extension of human cognitive capacities, capable of amplifying processes of analysis, interpretation, and reflection (Issayev & Apendiyev, 2025). Through its ability to process vast quantities of information, to identify subtle patterns, and to formulate interdisciplinary connections, AI functions as a “cognitive partner” in the act of learning and historical research (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025). From this perspective, AI is not limited to the role of calculator or digital archive but becomes a co-author of historical interpretation, facilitating the generation of inferences, scenarios, and hypotheses that may transcend the limits of individual human analysis. Students can use AI to compare sources, identify causal relationships, visualize complex phenomena, or formulate more sophisticated questions, thereby constructing a learning framework in which technology amplifies critical reflection rather than replacing it. In this sense, AI can support the development of advanced forms of historical thinking, offering a work environment in which human-machine interaction produces a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the past.

3. Experiential Reconstruction of the Past: Towards a Pedagogy of Immersion

The experiential reconstruction of the past represents one of the most innovative contributions of artificial intelligence to history pedagogy, as it enables students to access historical realities through visual and narrative immersion rather than abstract description (Bonsu et al., 2025). Generative AI can recreate vanished cities, simulate historical events, and model everyday life in different epochs, allowing learners to explore contexts that are no longer directly observable. Through such immersive representations, students can analyze social dynamics, compare historical transformations, and engage with the past in a multisensory manner that extends beyond traditional text-based learning.

This approach aligns with the theory of situated learning, which emphasizes that authentic understanding emerges through engagement with meaningful contexts rather than through rote memorization (Lave & Wenger, 1991). AI-generated simulations create virtual historical environments in which students can actively explore and interact, fostering deeper comprehension and contextual awareness (Smith, 2025). Furthermore, the integration of generative imagery enhances learning by activating episodic memory, which is more effective than purely verbal processing in retaining complex information (Torres-Morales et al., 2024). As a result, AI transforms history education into an immersive, interactive, and cognitively rich experience that supports diverse learning styles and promotes lasting understanding.

4. Personalization of Learning and Epistemic Equity

The integration of artificial intelligence into history education is transformative primarily through its capacity to enable highly personalized learning, thereby contributing

to epistemic equity within educational environments. Unlike traditional models that address an “average” learner, AI adapts content to each student’s pace, cognitive level, and learning style, optimizing understanding and reducing disparities in access to knowledge (Almalawi, 2024). This adaptability supports a pedagogy that values diversity and promotes inclusion, making historical learning more accessible and relevant for varied learner profiles (Kulbayeva, 2025).

Furthermore, AI facilitates intelligent didactic differentiation by adjusting explanations according to students’ cognitive–affective rhythms, from simplified narratives to complex, multi-layered analyses. This individualized support enhances autonomy, minimizes cognitive barriers, and fosters deeper comprehension of historical contexts. In parallel, AI significantly improves accessibility by transforming content into multiple formats—audio, visual, or simplified text—and by providing translations or adaptive pathways tailored to learners with diverse needs.

As a result, artificial intelligence not only optimizes the learning process but also democratizes access to historical knowledge, transforming history education into a more inclusive, flexible, and equitable experience.

5. Contributions of Behavioral Anthropology: AI as an Analyzer of Historical Patterns

Behavioral anthropology, an interdisciplinary field situated at the intersection of anthropology, social psychology, and cognitive sciences, investigates how collective behaviors, cultural norms, symbols, and social pressures influence historical evolution. Traditionally, the analysis of these dimensions has relied on fieldwork, qualitative interpretations, and cross-cultural comparisons, which sometimes limit the scalability of research (Naidin, 2025). What I want to underline is that the integration of artificial intelligence into this field opens a new methodological horizon: AI enables the simultaneous processing of massive quantities of historical, demographic, linguistic, and cultural data, offering a “big history” perspective on human developments. In this sense, AI can identify recurring patterns in social behavior, from the dynamics of solidarity and conflict to how communities react to climatic, economic, or political stress. By correlating these data, it becomes possible to map behavioral structures that would otherwise remain invisible at the level of traditional analysis.

Moreover, AI facilitates an understanding of how cultural and symbolic practices shape historical processes, revealing subtle connections between collective memories, rituals, founding myths, and the dynamics of social institutions. For instance, AI can analyze the evolution of identity discourses, the role of narratives in creating a sense of belonging, or the influence of political symbols on collective mobilization. This behavioral–anthropological approach allows a reconceptualization of history as an emergent system, in which individual decisions and cultural practices accumulate into significant macro-level patterns (Naidin, 2026). I argue that it is obvious that AI not only complements the traditional methods of behavioral anthropology but amplifies them, offering tools for analyzing complex relationships between culture, behavior, and historical change. In this way, AI becomes an epistemic mediator between micro-cultural narratives and macro-historical processes, contributing to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the evolution of human societies.

Through their capacity to process very large volumes of data, artificial intelligence algorithms can detect collective patterns that would remain difficult to

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observe through traditional methods of historical analysis (Jamarani et al. 2024). Using techniques such as clustering, network analysis, and predictive modelling, AI can reveal regularities in the dynamics of migrations, trade flows, and cultural exchanges, shedding light on how populations moved, interacted, and influenced each other in different periods. It can also analyze the internal structure of empires, identifying power relations, administrative nodes, and recurrent zones of instability, as well as patterns of diffusion of religious, technological, or political ideas. Likewise, algorithms can map informal networks of influence—political elites, intellectual communities, commercial groups—revealing subtle logics that shape historical evolution. This capacity to integrate disparate data into a coherent vision turns AI into a tool of macro-historical analysis that helps students understand that history is not merely a succession of events, but the result of complex interactions between actors, structures, and social processes.

One of the most valuable contributions of artificial intelligence to historical research and teaching lies in its capacity to integrate and correlate large volumes of data drawn from economic, climatic, and demographic sources, offering a multi-level perspective on historical phenomena. We know that, traditionally, historians have faced methodological limits related to the availability and comparability of data, as well as to the difficulty of analyzing multiple variables simultaneously. AI overcomes these constraints through analytical models capable of detecting complex relationships between historical events and factors such as economic fluctuations (grain prices, trade cycles), climate crises (drought, volcanic eruptions, multi-annual climate oscillations), population migrations, or technological transformations. In this way, students can understand that history is not determined exclusively by political or military decisions, but by a constellation of structural forces that are often invisible at the level of traditional textbooks (Camps-Valls, 2025).

Through this integrative approach, AI contributes to the development of systemic historical thinking, in which events are interpreted as outcomes of interactions between environment, economy, technology, and social dynamics. For example, AI can highlight links between medieval climate crises and political instability, between technological innovations and demographic transformations, or between fluctuations in food prices and popular revolts. This ability to visualize interdependencies among macro-level variables (economic structures, climate change), mezzo-level dynamics (regional processes), and micro-level realities (everyday life of individuals) transforms the study of history into a complex, interdisciplinary endeavor. In this way, AI not only amplifies analytical capacity but also promotes a deeper understanding of how historical phenomena emerge from networks of connections, offering students a holistic view of the past (Dong et al., 2025).

A significant conceptual danger in integrating artificial intelligence into the study of history is algorithmic determinism, the tendency to regard AI models as tools capable of offering exhaustive, “mathematized” explanations of historical processes. Because these models can generate graphs, predictions, statistical correlations, and causal simulations with a high degree of internal coherence, students and even teachers may be tempted to perceive history as a fully predictable system, in which events unfold according to deterministic logics (Almalawi et al., 2024). This perception is misleading. AI models function by aggregating data from the past, and algorithms identify recurring patterns rather than emergent dynamics. Thus, reducing history to a set of probabilistic relationships can ignore non-quantifiable factors such as contingency, human improvisation, unpredictable political action, or subtle cultural influences. In this way, AI

can create the illusion of a “mathematized history” that sacrifices the complexity of phenomena in favor of simplified interpretations.

Furthermore, algorithmic determinism can lead to the erosion of history’s hermeneutic dimension, as emphasis shifts to statistical results rather than critical interpretation (Cotta, 2026). Students may come to believe that AI models “prove” a certain version of the past, ignoring the fact that any algorithmic analysis depends on data selection, preprocessing methods, and model-optimization criteria. This dependence on available data risks implicitly reproducing cultural biases, archival gaps, or geographic imbalances, transforming the algorithm into a mechanism that reinforces dominant narratives. To prevent these distortions, it is essential for teachers and researchers to emphasize the probabilistic, limited, and contextual nature of AI models, as well as the necessity of correlating algorithmic results with traditional qualitative analysis. Only in this way we can help AI become an epistemic partner rather than an absolute substitute for historical interpretation.

6. AI and the Critical Processing of Historical Sources

In my view, one of the most promising advantages of artificial intelligence in history education is its ability to support source verification and comparative textual analysis. AI can examine documents from different periods, translations, or authors, identifying variations in language, tone, and structure that may indicate inconsistencies, interpolations, or potential forgeries. This enhances both research and teaching by helping students understand the complexity of historical sources and the importance of contextual interpretation.

Moreover, AI enables large-scale comparative analysis, processing vast datasets to reveal recurring patterns across regions and time periods, thus fostering a deeper, transversal understanding of historical phenomena (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025). It also plays a crucial role in combating historical misinformation by rapidly cross-referencing claims with reliable sources and detecting inaccuracies or manipulative narratives (Ye et al., 2025). In this way, AI supports the development of critical historical literacy and informed, analytical thinking.

In my opinion, the most important aspect here is that by learning to use AI to detect falsehoods, we can improve our own ability to more easily identify such falsehoods when we encounter them online. In addition to identifying fakes, AI can contribute to the education of historical-digital literacy, helping students recognize discursive patterns specific to fake news: excessive simplifications, emotional appeals, unjustified generalizations, or references to non-existent “sources.” (Stanescu, 2026) By generating clearly structured explanations, AI can show why a historical claim is problematic, what evidence it lacks, what distortions it involves, and what alternative perspectives exist in academic research. This is how technology becomes not only a verification tool but also a vector for fostering critical thinking, encouraging students to adopt a reflective stance toward information. As I stated, we live in an era in which history is often politicized or instrumentalized by the media and that is why AI offers a pedagogical framework in which students learn not only “what happened,” but also how to evaluate truth, identify manipulation, and distinguish between legitimate interpretation and deliberate falsification of the past.

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7. Narrative and Storytelling: History as Participatory Experience

One of the most fertile applications of artificial intelligence in history education is interactive historical storytelling, which transforms students from passive recipients into active agents of knowledge construction. Through generative models, learners can engage in simulated dialogues with historical figures, formulate questions, and explore multiple perspectives, fostering both factual understanding and critical thinking (Azevedo, 2024). Such interactions also cultivate historical empathy by encouraging students to consider the motivations, values, and constraints shaping past actors.

AI-driven branching narratives further enhance learning by allowing students to make decisions within historical contexts and observe their consequences, thereby deepening their understanding of causality and complexity (Doroudi, 2023). From a cognitive perspective, narrative-based learning activates emotional and episodic memory systems, enabling students to internalize historical experiences more effectively (Rugg & Renoult, 2025; Keller et al., 2024).

Moreover, AI supports a pedagogy of historical creativity, where students co-construct knowledge by generating alternative scenarios, composing narratives, and comparing interpretations (Adamakis & Rachiotis, 2025; Svabo et al., 2025). In doing so, it promotes interpretive plurality and a nuanced understanding of history as a dynamic and multifaceted process (Perkins & Stengel, 2025).

8. Limits, Risks, and Epistemological Dilemmas

One of the most discussed risks associated with the use of artificial intelligence in history education is the potential for visual distortion of the past. Generative models are capable of producing images with remarkable aesthetic accuracy, but which do not always reflect documented realities. These representations may include erroneous, amalgamated, or stylized architectural, clothing, or social elements, since AI operates through probabilities rather than historiographical verification (Hughes-Warrington, 2025). Students, who do not always have the necessary training to distinguish between an authentic source and an algorithmic reconstruction, may confuse the generated image with a validated historical reality, leading to the formation of mistaken conceptions. Thus, the visual dimension becomes a sensitive area in the pedagogy of history, especially for disciplines that rely on iconography, artifacts, or archaeological reconstructions.

Moreover, AI's ability to generate "realistic" images can create an illusion of visual authority, in which students grant an image the status of "evidence" simply because it appears aesthetically credible (Lima, 2024). This artificial credibility can undermine the critical process necessary for historical interpretation, reducing the complexity of the past to a singular and potentially manipulated representation. In the absence of a reflective pedagogy (Navaneedhan, 2006), students may internalize this representation as the "true" version, ignoring the fact that any reconstruction—including the one generated by AI—is a possible interpretation, not a definitive description. Therefore, teachers must accompany the use of AI-generated imagery with clear explanations about the probabilistic nature of visual generation and encourage students to compare images with authentic historical sources, in order to develop a critical visual literacy that is essential in contemporary education.

Another important risk in integrating artificial intelligence into the study of history is the emergence of a subtle form of cognitive dependence, in which students come to rely excessively on algorithms to interpret, synthesize, and evaluate historical information. In a world where AI rapidly offers summaries, explanations, and seemingly coherent connections, students may tend to substitute their own intellectual effort with automatically generated answers (Santamaria-Velasco et al., 2025). In the absence of appropriate pedagogical intervention, students risk no longer distinguishing between their own interpretation and the algorithm-mediated one, unconsciously internalizing the model's biases and abandoning the process of individual problematization.

Furthermore, cognitive dependence can affect the development of fundamental historical competences, such as working directly with sources, examining divergent perspectives, identifying the intentions behind texts, or constructing evidence-based arguments. If AI is used as a system that "delivers the final interpretation," students may perceive historical analysis as a mechanical process, reducing it to simply reading the conclusions provided by the algorithm. Also we have to teach students to use AI as a support tool, not as a substitute for their own thinking.

A major risk associated with the use of artificial intelligence in history education is the phenomenon of overconfidence in models, whereby students may come to perceive AI as a supreme epistemic authority capable of delivering the "objective truth" about the past. This mistaken perception stems from the illusion of precision offered by language models: coherent formulations, well-structured arguments, and a discursive style that mimics historiographical expertise (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025). Students' overconfidence in these algorithmic outputs can erode their criteria for critically evaluating sources and lead to the unproblematic acceptance of generated conclusions.

In addition, this overconfidence can have profound epistemological consequences for the formation of historical thinking, since history is not a discipline of certainties but one of interpretations. If AI is perceived as an absolute provider of explanations, students may ignore the plural and contested character of historical narratives. A form of "algorithmic determinism" may set in, where the complexity of historical processes is reduced to the model's version, and tensions between different perspectives are flattened (Qin, Zi & Ge, 2026).

Another side effect of uncritical use of artificial intelligence in the study of history is the potential erosion of intellectual effort, as the technology offers rapid, simplified solutions that are accessible without substantial cognitive engagement. History, as a discipline, presupposes a complex analytical process: identifying sources, evaluating their credibility, comparing conflicting perspectives, formulating hypotheses, and constructing evidence-based arguments.

In the long term, such a practice may result in a form of superficial learning, in which students accumulate ready-made results but do not develop robust cognitive structures. The ability to construct rigorous argumentation, to understand contextual subtleties, and to work directly with historical sources can be diminished if AI is perceived as a sufficient source of interpretation (Al-kfairy et al., 2024). To prevent this erosion, AI must be integrated into an educational framework in which emphasis is placed on process rather than outcome: students must be guided to use AI as a support tool, not as a substitute for their own analysis. By promoting a reflective pedagogy that values intellectual effort, teachers can transform technology into an ally of deep learning, rather than a shortcut that undermines cognitive autonomy.

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9. Practical Examples of AI Integration in History Learning

Regarding the typology of AI-based approaches for optimizing history teaching and learning for the new generation, I would like to highlight several concrete examples. First, an effective method would be asking pupils/students to research a specific historical event. This would involve documenting the context, the actors involved, the unfolding of the event, and its consequences. All the gathered information would then be provided to an AI system, and the students would request it to generate, based on the data, either a short video or a series of representative images.

This exercise contributes to developing historical reasoning, enhancing digital literacy, and fostering the ability to transform factual information into visual, narrative, or multimodal representations that support deeper comprehension. Another possibility is to select a historical figure or event and stage a mock trial. The pupil/student must prepare both pro and contra arguments. These arguments are then introduced into an AI system, which is asked to deliver a verdict based on the evidence, as if it were a judge.

Such an exercise contributes to strengthening argumentation skills, encouraging multiperspectivity, and cultivating critical evaluation of historical evidence and interpretations.

A further approach involves asking both the pupil/student and the AI system to create an illustration based on a set of information provided by the teacher. The two drawings are then uploaded on social media to observe which representation receives more appreciation/views.

This type of activity contributes to understanding contemporary dynamics of digital visibility, promoting creativity, and enabling students to reflect on how historical narratives are visually constructed and socially validated in online environments.

Another approach is having the pupil/student write an essay about their personal history. Afterwards, the AI is asked to analyze how this individual story fits within broader global or national historical frameworks.

This exercise contributes to fostering historical consciousness, connecting micro-history with macro-history, and helping students understand how personal narratives intersect with collective processes and temporalities.

10. Conclusion

AI represents a profound transformation in the way history can be taught, understood, and accessed. It does not replace historical research; instead, it extends the interpretive field and facilitates democratic access to knowledge. Instead of a history understood as a succession of data, AI offers a history viewed as a complex system of causalities, behaviors, structures, and narratives.

The future of history education depends on the ability of teachers and researchers to use AI as an instrument of critical thinking, not as a substitute for reflection. In this sense, AI becomes an ally of history—not by changing the past, but by helping us to understand it. At the same time, if we learn to use AI correctly, we will be less exposed to the risk of believing in false information.

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