

AI in the History Classroom

How can Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools be Effectively Implemented in History Classrooms?

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Introduction

Background

History teaches students to think critically, analyse deeply, and research independently. However, concerns have been raised that Artificial Intelligence (AI) may have a significant impact on these essential skills. Colleagues and I observed students turning to AI tools for instant answers and simplified texts, often before using their own judgement. That said, AI literacy is an essential skill in our rapidly changing world, and even historians are debating its potential benefits and risks in the field. This project explores how AI can be integrated into the History classrooms.

Research Questions

- Which AI tools are most effective in the History classroom?
- What are student's perceptions of AI in History?
- How can we increase students' critical awareness when using AI?
- What are the opportunities and risks for History Teachers when implementing AI in lesson?

Literature

AI in education is a growing field of literature, some of the key findings in relation to my research include:

Digital tools boost motivation and engagement in History lessons (Malysheva et al., 2022).

AI personalisation tools and assistive technologies improve outcomes for SEN pupils (Haidar, 2024; Sundet, 2024; Kiryakova, 2024;).

AI supports teacher self-efficacy, reduces workload, but faces resistance from some educators (Kiryakova, 2024; Malysheva et al., 2022).

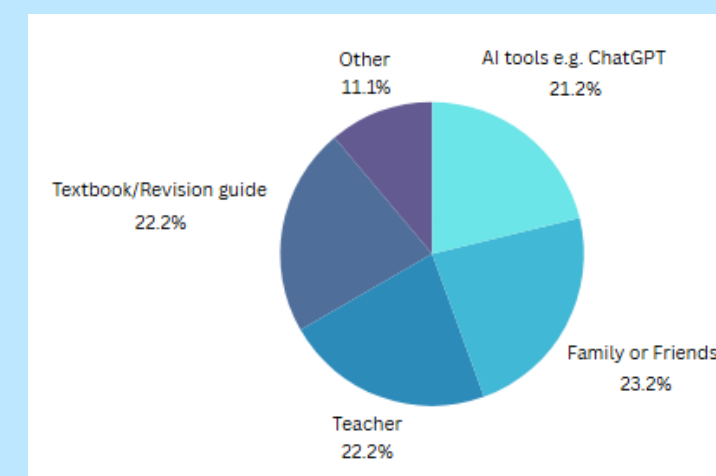
Ethical AI use requires training and teacher oversight, as AI lacks emotional intelligence and content validity (Sundet, 2024; Kiryakova, 2024).

Research

Methodology

Research was conducted through Teams surveys, focus group and interviews. Two surveys were completed at the beginning and end of the study by 3 teachers and 117 students (82 KS3 and 35 GCSE). These surveys were distributed by email and on Teams.

Results



AI Tools Used:

- Magicschool.ai was widely used; Some students reported preferring ChatGPT.
- 21% of students reported ChatGPT as their first choice when they don't understand a topic.
- The most common use for AI in History was research or simplifying academic texts.

Interest and Engagement

- 78% of students said Magicschool.ai tools made History lessons more interesting.
- Students using AI more regularly reported higher confidence in History.

Student Awareness:

- For one class, AI made a mistake which was reported by a student and discussed with the class. This class showed higher awareness than other classes about the limitations of AI. However, some students attributed the incident to the platform as opposed to AI.

Analysis

Findings align with Malysheva et al (2022) that digital tools enhance engagement., Sundet (2024) and Kiryakova (2024)'s emphasis on teacher training was validated by the need for teacher monitoring to identify AI mistakes.

Interesting findings:

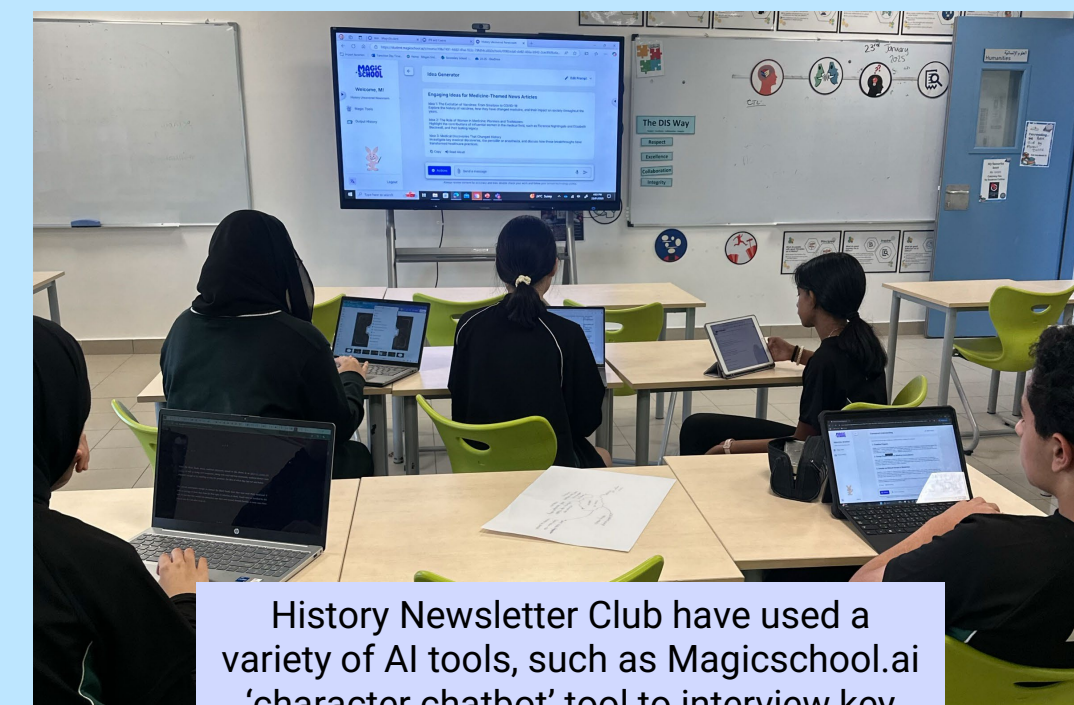
- Despite all classes discussing AI's mistakes, the class that experienced an unplanned error from AI showed the greatest improvement in critical awareness.
- Increased critical awareness had little effect on AI usage.
- Majority of students in the study still value traditional methods alongside AI. This supports a hybrid approach to technology.

Risks:

- Some students felt that Magicschool.ai makes more mistakes than ChatGPT, suggesting challenges when raising students' critical awareness of AI.

Limitations to data:

- Small teacher sample size.
- Short timescale to measure long-term effects of AI integration.



History Newsletter Club have used a variety of AI tools, such as Magicschool.ai 'character chatbot' tool to interview key figures from the past.

Conclusion

Through my action research I have found that AI tools like Magicschool.ai can enhance student engagement and confidence in History lessons. An unplanned mistake on Magicschool.ai had a greater impact on students' critical awareness in comparison to open discussion and/or remodeling the mistake. Increased critical awareness of AI does not necessarily change how students use AI.

Sharing my research with my department have highlighted the benefits of AI training and policies to support teachers' confidence to use AI tools or model ethical AI use to students.

Future research should investigate strategies for teaching AI literacy more effectively in subject-specific contexts and look at the long-term impacts of AI use on historical thinking and independent research skills.

References

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