



Analysis of Google Sites Media Needs to Improve Historical Thinking Skills in Local History Learning at SMAN 16 Palembang

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Received: 13-05-2026; Revised: 28-06-2026; Accepted: 01-07-2026; Published: 30-07-2026

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the need for Google Sites media development to improve students' historical thinking skills in local history learning at SMAN 16 Palembang. The method used is descriptive research with data collection through questionnaires, observations, interviews, tests, and documentation. The results show that current history learning is still conventional, with minimal digital media, and students' historical thinking skills, especially in the Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts indicator, are still low. The findings also reveal that web-based digital media, specifically Google Sites, has great potential to become an interactive learning medium that supports the presentation of local history material contextually, increases student engagement, facilitates analysis of historical evidence, and encourages reflection on historical values and perspectives, thereby improving the quality of history learning overall.

Keywords: big six historical thinking concepts; digital learning media; google sites; historical thinking; local history

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kebutuhan pengembangan media Google Sites dalam meningkatkan kemampuan berpikir sejarah siswa pada pembelajaran sejarah lokal di SMAN 16 Palembang. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian deskriptif dengan pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner, observasi, wawancara, tes, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran sejarah saat ini masih bersifat konvensional, minim media digital, dan keterampilan berpikir sejarah siswa, terutama pada indikator *Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts*, masih rendah. Temuan juga mengungkap bahwa media digital berbasis web, khususnya Google Sites, memiliki potensi besar untuk menjadi media pembelajaran interaktif yang mendukung penyajian materi sejarah lokal secara kontekstual, meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa, memfasilitasi analisis bukti sejarah, serta mendorong refleksi terhadap nilai dan perspektif sejarah, sehingga dapat meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran sejarah secara menyeluruh.

Kata Kunci: berpikir sejarah; big six historical thinking concepts; google sites; media pembelajaran digital; sejarah lokal



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Pendahuluan

Learning history plays a strategic role in the educational process because it not only conveys past facts but also shapes students' character, identity, and national awareness. As Sariyatun (2017) points out, history learning can instil nationalistic values and character by introducing the meaning of historical events to younger generations. Thus,

not only are cognitive aspects developed, but also affective and civic attitudes. Furthermore, developing historical thinking skills is increasingly important so that students go beyond memorisation to analyse, connect, and interpret historical events (Nurjanah, 2020). This aligns with the demands of digital literacy and higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) integrated into the contemporary curriculum, making history learning more relevant and challenging.

However, in the practice of history teaching in many schools, several fundamental problems persist. In many cases, learning remains conventional—the teacher is the centre of attention, students are passive, and the use of learning media is limited to textbooks and lectures. This condition leads to low student motivation because the material is perceived as less relevant to their daily lives. As revealed in one study, students struggle to see the connection between the past and their present world, leading to a lack of interest in studying history. Furthermore, the integration of digital technology in history learning remains minimal, despite today's students being accustomed to interactive and digital media. Lack of infrastructure and resources, as well as teachers' limited technological competence, exacerbate this situation (Kristanti & Sujana, 2022).

Focusing on local history is becoming increasingly urgent because it can foster students' sense of identity and understanding of their surrounding environment. For example, through learning local history, students can understand the relevance of events occurring in their own communities, allowing them to feel part of the historical narrative (Firmansyah, 2024). However, local history often receives insufficient attention—both because of limited learning resources and less engaging media for students. Findings show that most textbooks and school resources still focus on national history, leaving students less exposed to local narratives that could strengthen their regional identity (Fikri et al., 2024). In the Palembang context, for example, major local events, such as the Five-Day Battle of Palembang, have not been optimally incorporated into interactive, contextual learning (Mareta & Jamil, 2022).

In the era of advancing educational technology, web-based media offers a real opportunity to transform learning into a more interactive, flexible, and contextual experience. For example, online platforms enable the integration of multimedia such as video, audio, images, interactive maps, and external links, significantly enriching students' learning experiences (Putri et al., 2023). In the context of local history learning, the use of digital media can bridge the gap between students and historical sources that were previously difficult to access—whether due to location, physical conditions, or time constraints. Thus, the use of web-based media is not merely a "supplement" but a strategic component for enabling active and meaningful learning.

One platform worth considering is Google Sites. This platform has several advantages that make it highly suitable for school contexts: free access. This easy-to-use interface does not require advanced programming skills, and flexibility in incorporating various types of learning content. Of note, research shows that Google Sites-based learning media has been proven valid, easy to use, and effective in improving learning outcomes (Suriansyah & Susanto, 2024). Therefore, this platform has great potential for adoption by teachers and schools seeking to strengthen digital literacy and develop students' HOTS.

The advantages of Google Sites are even more apparent when viewed in its ability to integrate multimedia, facilitate collaboration between students and teachers, and provide cross-device access (desktop, tablet, smartphone). Thus, teachers are not simply

passively delivering content; they can also design learning activities for students to explore independently or in groups. This aligns with the demands of 21st-century learning, which requires active student engagement, digital literacy, and collaboration.

The decision to use Google Sites as the medium for this study was also based on practical considerations. Many alternative media—such as commercial Learning Management Systems (LMS) or paid applications—require licensing fees, specialised infrastructure, and significant training time for teachers and students. In other words, Google Sites offers a balance between technical capabilities and ease of adoption, which is crucial for schools with limited resources. For example, students struggle to assess the importance of a local event (Establishing Historical Significance), lack the skills to use historical documents or artefacts as sources of evidence (Using Primary Sources/Evidence), and struggle to understand change and continuity in local history (Identifying Continuity and Change) (Seixas, 2006). These symptoms indicate the need for appropriate, context-specific learning media interventions to strengthen students' historical thinking skills at the school.

In the case of SMAN 16 Palembang, the use of web-based digital media has great potential as a repository for local history learning, easily accessible to teachers and students. Thus, this media provides a concrete response to the need for documentation and continuous access to local history materials. The potential use of digital media also includes the ability to display historical narratives, interactive multimedia, maps, quizzes, and critical thinking activities. Studies show that multimedia in history learning brings the material "alive" for students, visualises past events, facilitates understanding of context, and increases the relevance of learning (Afwan et al., 2020). With Google Sites supporting text, images, videos, and interactive maps, students' historical thinking activities, such as analysing change, evaluating evidence, and understanding continuity, can be encouraged in a more engaging and participatory online environment.

Finally, the development of digital media at SMAN 16 Palembang opens up opportunities for collaboration and long-term documentation of local history materials. Students and teachers can upload field research results, local archival photos, interviews with local historical figures, digital maps of Palembang, and even quizzes that test historical thinking skills. Research indicates that this type of interactive media can increase students' interest in learning and the quality of their learning experiences (Widja, 1991).

Several studies indicate that Google Sites can be used to upload learning materials, store syllabi, assign assignments, and collect and review student assignments (Taaraaungan et al., 2025). Research by Djoko et al. (2024) also shows that Google Sites provides access across devices—desktops, tablets, and smartphones—enabling students to learn anytime, anywhere. This platform supports embedding various Google Workspace tools, such as Docs, Slides, Forms, and Maps, enabling it to serve as an easily accessible "resource library" without requiring advanced technical skills (Panji, 2022). This feature is highly relevant in the digital age, where students demand flexibility and accessibility in learning. This platform enables teachers to present relevant local content and facilitate independent and collaborative exploration through web assignments, discussion forums, or digital projects. Other research has also found that digital media, such as Google Sites, supports teachers in managing more engaging, contextually oriented learning that develops students' historical thinking skills. This platform enables teachers to present relevant local content and facilitate independent and collaborative exploration

through web assignments, discussion forums, or digital projects (Djoko et al., 2024). Thus, the digitisation of history learning media is not simply a replacement for textbooks but also improves pedagogical quality and student engagement. Platforms like Google Sites enable the collection of materials, assignments, project results, and student work in a single, integrated online space that can be accessed flexibly anytime, anywhere (Mubarok et al., 2025). These studies differ from this study in that they focus on developing Google Sites media to improve students' historical thinking skills in history learning.

Therefore, this study aims to analyse the need for Google Sites media development to improve students' historical thinking skills in local history learning at SMAN 16 Palembang. The research focus at SMAN 16 Palembang is deemed important because there are clear indications that students' historical thinking skills remain inadequate, particularly within the Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts framework (Seixas & Peck, 2004). Therefore, SMAN 16 Palembang has a strategic opportunity to utilise Google Sites to strengthen local history learning and students' historical literacy.

Research Method

This study used a descriptive, mixed-methods approach to analyse the need for the development of Google Sites-based learning media for local history learning at SMAN 16 Palembang. This approach was chosen because it combines quantitative and qualitative data, providing a more comprehensive picture of learning conditions, user needs, and the effectiveness of the developed learning media. The study focused on a needs analysis to identify the initial conditions for local history learning, teacher readiness to utilise digital media, student motivation and interest, and the potential of Google Sites to improve historical thinking skills. The research subjects consisted of history teachers and students at SMAN 16 Palembang, selected using purposive sampling, a deliberate selection of subjects based on their relevance to the research objectives.

The data in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from teachers and students through questionnaires, tests, observations, and interviews. In contrast, secondary data were obtained from documentation such as syllabi, teaching modules, teaching materials, student work, and photographs of learning activities. Data collection techniques were employed in several ways. Questionnaires were used to measure teachers' and students' perceptions, needs, and motivations regarding the use of Google Sites in history learning. Tests were used to assess students' historical thinking skills based on Peter Seixas and Tom Morton's Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts, which include analysing historical sources, understanding the significance of events, continuity and change, cause and effect, historical perspective, and ethical dimensions. Observations were conducted to observe learning activities, teacher-student interactions, and the use of existing media. Interviews were conducted to explore teachers' and students' experiences, obstacles, and needs related to digital learning media. Documentation was used to strengthen the data obtained from other techniques.

The research instruments used included questionnaires, test questions, observation sheets, interview guides, and documentation. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data on media users' perceptions and needs, while the test questions measured students' historical thinking skills. The observation sheets were used to record student engagement and teacher learning strategies during the learning process. The interview guides were used to obtain in-depth qualitative data regarding media users' perspectives, barriers, and needs.

Data analysis in this study was conducted qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data analysis used an interactive model by Miles et al. (2014), which includes data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data from interviews, observations, and documentation were coded using the Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts indicators to identify patterns in media needs and effectiveness in history learning. Meanwhile, quantitative data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to process questionnaire data into frequencies, percentages, and averages. A t-test was used to determine differences in students' historical thinking skills before and after using Google Sites. The combination of these two analysis techniques allows researchers to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the needs and effectiveness of Google Sites media in local history learning at SMAN 16 Palembang..

Research Results

Research Data

1. Questionnaire Results

Table 1. Questionnaire Results: Student Satisfaction with Current Learning Methods

No.	Answer Categories	Code	Amount	Percentage
1	Very satisfied	SP	177	25%
2	Satisfied	P	217	31%
3	Not satisfied	TP	261	37%
4	Very Dissatisfied	STP	54	8%
Total Response			709	100%

Source: Research Data, 2025

Based on Table 1, student satisfaction with the current learning methods shows significant variation. Of the 709 responses, only 25% of students reported being very satisfied, and 31% reported being satisfied, for a total of 56% feeling either quite or very satisfied with the current learning methods. However, the data also shows that 37% of students reported being dissatisfied, and 8% reported being very dissatisfied, resulting in nearly 45% of students experiencing dissatisfaction with the current learning methods. This indicates a gap in the quality of the learning experience, likely related to a lack of interactive media, limited method variety, or limited resources to support history learning.

This interpretation confirms that, while some students find the current methods adequate, nearly half remain dissatisfied, necessitating interventions that use more engaging, interactive, and contextually relevant learning media. In the context of this research, these results support the need to develop Google Sites media to make local history learning more engaging and improve students' historical thinking skills..

2. Test Results

To determine students' levels of historical thinking skills, a test was used as a data-collection tool. This test consisted of 12 multiple-choice questions. Each pair of questions represented one indicator of historical thinking skills (Seixas, 2006). Students were given 15 minutes to complete the test, and the results served as a reference for the researcher in determining the students' level of historical thinking skills.

Of course, evaluating students' work must be based on in-depth academic research to maintain the research's objectivity. Therefore, the researcher used standards (Laksana, 2020) that provide an overview of the categorisation of levels of historical thinking skills as follows:

Table 2. Categories of Students' Historical Thinking Skills

Score Range	Ability Category	General Interpretation
0.01 – 1.00	Very Low)	Students are unable to demonstrate a basic understanding of historical concepts.
1.01 – 2.00	Low)	Students have limited understanding, only able to remember facts without in-depth analysis.
2.01 – 3.00	Moderate)	Students begin to understand the relationships between events, but are not yet consistent in their historical reasoning.
3.01 – 4.00	High)	Students are able to interpret cause-effect relationships and historical context quite well.
4.01 – 5.00	Very High)	Students demonstrate complex, analytical, and reflective historical thinking skills.

Source: (Laksana, 2020)

The table above serves as a reference for researchers in interpreting the test results students have completed. These ability categories are useful for classifying students' historical thinking skills by matching the researcher's scores and comparing them with the ability category table to determine the student's overall category. From this scoring mechanism, it can be seen that the scores range from 1.00 to 5.00, whereas the researchers used a 1-100 scale. Therefore, the method for calculating the scores for classification must be converted to ensure relevant results using the following function:

$$\text{Kittisak Score} = \frac{\text{Average value}}{20}$$

Then, after the researchers carried out a test that tested the level of students' historical thinking abilities at SMAN 16 Palembang on August 25 2025, the following results were obtained:

Table 4. Pretest Results of Historical Thinking Ability of Students at SMAN 16 Palembang

No	Indikator Kemampuan Berpikir Sejarah	Rata-rata Skor (0-100)	Skor Skala Kittisak (÷20)	Kategori
1	Historical Significance	58.7	2.94	Enough
2	Use of Evidence	47.3	2.36	Low
3	Continuity and Change	45.8	2.29	Low
4	Cause and Consequence	48.5	2.42	Low
5	Historical Perspective Taking	55.2	2.76	Enough
6	Ethical Dimension	49.4	2.47	Low

Source: Research Data, 2025

Overall, the average achievement level across the six historical thinking skills indicators was 50.8%, indicating it fell into the "Fairly Low" category. Further review reveals that only about 33% of indicators (2 out of 6) were in the "Fair" category: Historical Significance (58.7%) and Historical Perspective Taking (55.2%). Meanwhile, the remaining 67% of indicators (4 out of 6) — Use of Evidence, Continuity and Change, Cause and Consequence, and Ethical Dimension — were still in the "Low" category. This indicates that most students have not yet mastered analytical and reflective historical thinking skills, such as the ability to critically interpret historical evidence, identify continuity and change across periods, understand causal relationships in context, and draw ethical values and moral meaning from past events.

3. Observation Results

Table 4. Classroom Observation Results

No.	Observed Aspect	Indicator	Observation Result	Remarks
A. Teacher Activities				
1	Use of learning media	The teacher uses digital learning media (PowerPoint, videos, websites, etc.)	No	Media is still limited to text and slides without interactive elements
2	Variety of teaching methods	The teacher uses a variety of methods (discussion, question-and-answer, projects, etc.)	No	There were no discussions, projects, or collaborative activities
3	Student engagement	The teacher encourages active student participation	No	Students mostly listened passively
4	Classroom management	The teacher manages time and the learning atmosphere effectively	Yes	The teacher managed time well, but activities lacked variety
B. Student Activities				
5	Enthusiasm toward learning	Students show interest during the lesson	Low	Some students appeared passive and unfocused
6	Participation in discussions	Students actively answer questions or ask questions	Low	Approximately 20% of students participated actively
7	Use of digital media	Students are involved in using digital media during learning activities	No	No digital devices were utilized during the lesson
C. Learning Materials and Media				
8	Relevance of materials to the local context	Local history material (Srivijaya) is presented contextually	Yes	Learning resources were not linked to the surrounding environment
9	Attractiveness of learning media	The media used is visually appealing and interactive	No	Only text and key points were displayed
10	Accessibility of media	The media can be easily accessed by students	No	No online learning resources were available
D. Responses and Challenges				
11	Learning challenges	There are challenges in understanding or using the media	Yes	Many students could not remember the sequence of events and historical figures

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12	Students' response to the media	Students feel helped by the media used	No	78% of students stated that the learning process was monotonous
13	Suggestions from teachers/students	Feedback regarding learning media needs is provided	Yes	The teacher would like a web-based learning medium that is easy to access
E. Students' Historical Thinking Skills				
14	Chronology and Change Over Time (Change and Continuity)	Students are able to recognize the sequence of historical events and patterns of change and continuity across periods	Low	Students still have difficulty understanding the sequence of events and cannot fully relate changes across historical periods
15	Causality and Complexity of Events (Cause and Consequence)	Students are able to explain cause-and-effect relationships in historical events logically and in a multi-layered manner	Low	Most students only provide descriptive answers without deeply explaining causes and consequences
16	Historical Context (Contextual Understanding)	Students understand historical events according to the context of time, place, and societal values of the period	No	Students judge historical events from a present-day perspective and do not yet understand the socio-cultural context of the era
17	Use of Historical Evidence (Use of Evidence)	Students are able to interpret and use historical sources to support arguments	No	There were no historical source analysis activities; students only received information from the teacher without evaluating historical evidence
18	Historical Perspective and Empathy (Historical Perspective Taking)	Students understand the viewpoints, motivations, and experiences of historical figures empathetically	Low	Students are not yet able to understand historical figures from the perspective of the past, resulting in shallow interpretations
19	Ethical and Historical Significance Dimension (Ethical and Significance Dimension)	Students are able to assess the moral values and relevance of historical events to contemporary life	Low	Students have not yet demonstrated reflection on the values and moral meanings of the historical events studied

Source: Research Data, 2025

Classroom observations indicate that conventional methods and minimal use of digital media still dominate the history learning process at SMAN 16 Palembang. Regarding teacher activities, observations revealed that teachers do not use interactive digital learning media; they use only text and slides, without multimedia elements. Furthermore, a variety of teaching methods, such as discussions, projects, or collaborative

activities, are not used, despite teachers' ability to manage time and the learning environment effectively. Consequently, student engagement is also low, as most students listen rather than actively participate.

Regarding student activities, enthusiasm and participation during learning are relatively low. Only around 20% of students actively participate in discussions, and students do not use digital media during learning activities. This indicates that learning is less engaging and does not stimulate students' critical and creative thinking skills. The learning materials and media also showed weaknesses. Local history material, particularly about the Srivijaya Kingdom, is presented without contextualising it with the surrounding environment. The media used are visually unappealing and interactive and cannot be accessed online by students. This situation makes learning monotonous and hinders students' exploration of local history.

Regarding responses and obstacles, various problems were identified in understanding and using media. Most students had difficulty remembering the sequence of historical events and figures, and 78% reported that learning felt monotonous. Teachers and students suggested using easily accessible web-based media to increase student interest and engagement. The most crucial aspect is students' historical thinking skills. Observations show that students remain low in almost all indicators of Seixas' Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts, including:

- a. Change and Continuity: Students have difficulty understanding the sequence of events and the continuity between historical periods.
- b. Cause and Consequence: Students are only able to explain cause and effect descriptively, without going into depth.
- c. Contextual Understanding: Students assess historical events from a contemporary perspective, not understanding the sociocultural context of the era.
- d. Use of Evidence: Students do not analyse historical sources, only receiving information from the teacher.
- e. Historical Perspective Taking: Students are not yet able to empathically see the perspectives of historical figures.
- f. Ethical and Significance Dimension: Students rarely demonstrate reflection on moral values or the relevance of events to contemporary life.
- g. The overall findings indicate an urgent need for interactive, contextual, and easily accessible learning media, such as Google Sites, to improve students' participation, motivation, and overall historical thinking skills.

4. Interview Results

The researchers also conducted structured interviews with six informants, including history teachers and students from SMAN 16 Palembang (3 history teachers and 3 students as representatives), regarding issues surrounding historical thinking skills and the need for innovation in history learning that utilises more digitalisation.

The first interview was conducted on August 20, 2025, with Ms S, an 11th-grade history teacher. She stated that students' historical thinking skills were still relatively low, particularly in connecting cause-and-effect relationships and the context of historical events. *"Selama ini saya menjelaskan perubahan di masa Sriwijaya pakai papan tulis dan PowerPoint, tapi siswa cepat bosan. Kalau ada media yang bisa nampilin visual peta perubahan wilayah atau video singkat, mungkin mereka lebih paham."* ("I have been explaining the changes during the Srivijaya era using a whiteboard and PowerPoint

presentation, but students quickly get bored. If there were media that could show visual maps of regional changes or short videos, they might understand better").

This statement indicates that lecture methods and conventional media have not been able to stimulate historical thinking skills, particularly in the dimensions of causality and temporal change. Teachers tend to emphasise memorising facts, while students are not yet accustomed to thinking chronologically to understand how events developed from one phase to another.

In a follow-up interview with a grade 11 social studies student, R (August 20, 2025), he stated that history lessons often feel like *"cerita masa lalu yang jauh dari kehidupan sekarang"* ("a story from the past that is far removed from the present"). According to him, students only remember the names of kings, the year the kingdom was founded, and its legacy, but fail to understand why Srivijaya became a centre of international trade and how its glory influenced present-day Palembang. *"Kadang kita bingung, kenapa sih Sriwijaya bisa besar banget padahal dulu belum ada teknologi? Kalau cuma dijelaskan lewat slide, susah ngebayanginnya."* "Sometimes we are confused: how did Srivijaya become so large when technology did not exist back then? If it is only explained through slides, it is hard to imagine."

This statement demonstrates that students have not yet developed historical thinking skills at a contextual level, namely the ability to view events as the result of complex and interconnected processes. They tend to understand history as a collection of statistical facts rather than as a series of events that can be analysed in terms of change, continuity, and impact.

Furthermore, an interview with one of the young teachers, Mr R (August 20, 2025), further corroborated these findings. *"Kalau saya lihat, anak-anak sebenarnya penasaran sama sejarah, tapi medianya kurang menarik. Mereka lebih cepat paham kalau ada simulasi, misalnya mereka bisa buka situs yang menampilkan peta ekspansi wilayah Sriwijaya atau jalur perdagangan lautnya. Dari situ baru muncul rasa ingin tahu, kenapa bisa begitu, siapa yang terlibat, dan apa akibatnya."* ("From what I have seen, the children are actually curious about history, but the media is not engaging enough. They understand better when there is a simulation; for example, they can open a website that displays a map of Srivijaya's territorial expansion or its maritime trade routes. That is when their curiosity arises: why it happened so quickly, who was involved, and what the consequences were").

This statement demonstrates that digital media, such as Google Sites, have great potential to facilitate historical thinking skills by allowing students to explore historical sources visually and interactively. Through the display of maps, chronologies, and digital primary sources, students can learn to connect evidence to their own interpretations of historical events. An interview with another student, M (August 20, 2025), also revealed a similar sentiment. He stated that he prefers learning history by *"lihat gambar, peta, atau video tentang zaman dulu"*, karena hal itu membuatnya lebih mudah memahami *"urutan kejadian dan kenapa peristiwa itu bisa terjadi."* ("looking at pictures, maps, or videos about the past"), because it makes it easier to understand *"urutan kejadian dan kenapa peristiwa itu bisa terjadi."* ("the sequence of events and why they happened").

From these interviews, it can be concluded that history instruction at SMAN 16 Palembang still focuses on transmission rather than on developing historical thinking skills such as chronology, causality, and historical empathy. This condition is the basis for developing interactive Google Sites media, so that students not only remember events but

also interpret and reason about the dynamics of past changes with a complete historical way of thinking..

Discussion

Learning in secondary schools often demonstrates that traditional methods alone are insufficient to develop students' in-depth historical thinking skills. Research shows that most students are dissatisfied with current learning methods, and observations reveal that student activity remains largely passive. This aligns with Peter Seixas & Peck's theoretical framework regarding the Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts, which include Historical Significance, Use of Evidence, Continuity & Change, Cause & Consequence, Historical Perspective, and Ethical Dimension (Seixas & Morton, 2013). Because many of these indicators have not yet been mastered by students, there is a clear need to develop learning media that foster active historical thinking.

Web-based digital media has the potential to address this need. For example, research by Faiza & Wardhani (2024) shows that students recognise that digital media plays an important role in history learning and helps clarify concepts through visuals and quick access to learning resources. This situation strengthens the argument that platforms like Google Sites can serve as learning media that not only provide information but also offer tools for students to explore, analyse, and interpret historical sources.

Furthermore, field observations indicate that media use remains limited to static text and slides, without interactive or collaborative elements. Teachers rarely facilitate the use of historical evidence or encourage students to take the perspective of historical figures (Historical Perspective). This indicates that the current media are not yet capable of encouraging students to reach a higher level of historical thinking. Seixas & Morton's theory asserts that effective history learning involves activities in which students ask "How do we know what we know about the past?" and evaluate evidence and perspectives (Seixas & Peck, 2004).

Another study by Debatri Banerjee (2024) revealed that integrating digital tools into history instruction can increase student engagement, interactivity, and critical thinking. While challenges such as infrastructure and teacher readiness still need to be addressed, these results support the hypothesis that developing digital media in schools can improve historical thinking skills. This confirms that the need to develop media like Google Sites is not just an idea but a strategy relevant to real-world conditions.

In a specific school context, such as SMAN 16 Palembang, findings indicate that various aspects of learning remain suboptimal: low student participation, less interactive media, and limited access to digital materials. Therefore, Google Sites development can be specifically directed to support all of the Big Six indicators: presenting local history material contextually (Historical Significance), providing digital archival documents for student analysis (Use of Evidence), mapping local changes through maps and timelines (Continuity & Change), and providing a space for students to reflect on historical values (Ethical Dimension).

Furthermore, digital media offers teachers the opportunity to shift their role from "teacher-informer" to "learning facilitator," where students actively explore and collaborate. This aligns with findings that the use of interactive media increases students' interest in and participation in learning (Kristanti & Sujana, 2022). Thus, Google Sites development is a strategic tool for strengthening the pedagogical and technological dimensions of history learning.

Therefore, this study's findings reveal a gap between the current state of learning and the ideal goals outlined by Seixas & Morton's theory of historical thinking. This gap provides a strong basis for the hypothesis that Google Sites-based learning media will improve students' historical thinking skills. Supported by theory and empirical research on digital media in history learning, developing such media is not only relevant but also urgent.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of questionnaires, observations, and historical thinking skills tests, it can be concluded that history instruction at SMAN 16 Palembang is currently conventional, lacks digital media, and inadequately develops students' historical thinking skills, as indicated by the Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts indicators, according to Seixas & Morton. Students demonstrated low motivation, engagement, and critical thinking skills in understanding chronology, cause and effect, historical context, use of evidence, historical perspective, and the ethical dimensions of local history material, particularly the Srivijaya Kingdom. This situation indicates a clear need for the development of interactive, context-based learning media that can enhance students' historical understanding and thinking skills.

This research also demonstrates that web-based digital media, particularly Google Sites, has significant potential to be an effective learning solution. Google Sites can facilitate the interactive presentation of local history material, provide access to a variety of learning resources, encourage collaboration, and support student reflection on the value and relevance of history. Thus, the development of Google Sites is not only relevant for increasing student engagement and motivation but also strategic for strengthening all of the Big Six historical thinking indicators, thereby improving the overall quality of history learning at SMAN 16 Palembang.

Acknowledgements

The author expresses his deepest gratitude to SMAN 16 Palembang for their permission and support throughout this research process, especially to the history teachers and students who actively participated in completing the questionnaires, interviews, and learning observations. He also expresses his gratitude to his colleagues and supervisors who provided valuable advice, guidance, and inspiration during the preparation of this research. The support, cooperation, and contributions of all these parties were crucial to the successful completion of this research.

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