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EMPOWERING ENGLISH TEACHERS: STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING DIGITAL SKILLS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Annotation: The article is about the importance of the competences in acquiring pedagogical competence, including the role and significance of digital skills, its components, important factors in the acquisition and development of digital skills.

Key words: pedagogical competence, digital competence, blogs, news sites and social sites.

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqola pedagogik kompetensiyani egallashda yondosh kompetensiyalar, jumladan raqamli kompetensiyaning o'rni va ahamiyati, uning komponentlari, raqamli kompetensiyani egallash hamda rivojlantirishda muhim sanalgan omillar xususida so'z boradi.

Kalit so'zlar: pedagogik kompetensiya, raqamli kompetensiya, blogs, news websites, and social media.

Аннотация. В данной статье речь идет о других компетенциях в приобретении педагогической компетентности, в том числе о роли и значении цифровой компетентности, ее компонентах, важных факторах приобретения цифровой компетентности.

Ключевые слова: педагогическая компетентность, цифровая компетентность, блоги, новостные сайты и социальные сайты.

Many jobs today need digital skills. We need them even for jobs that do not ask for high levels of qualifications or experience. For example, if you work in a warehouse or a shop you may keep digital records of stock. Essential digital tools are a step towards learning lots of other new things. They can improve your confidence to use technology for work, learning and daily life. Essential digital skills include being able to:

- use devices like a computer, tablet or mobile phone for simple, personal and work tasks, teaching process;
- find and use information on the internet about teaching tools, teaching methods and techniques;
- understand how to be safe and responsible online when learning or searching for some important information;
- communicate socially and professionally using email, messaging and social media.

As we have already mentioned, digital competence refers to the ability to use digital technologies effectively and responsibly in order to access, manage, evaluate, create, and communicate

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information. It includes the skills and knowledge needed to navigate digital tools and platforms, critically assess online information, protect personal data and privacy, collaborate and communicate online, and create digital content [1:279-296]. Digital competence is increasingly important in today's digital age, as technology plays a significant role in many aspects of our lives, including education, work, and social interactions. Developing digital competence is essential for individuals to thrive in a digital society and effectively participate in the digital economy. Technology is constantly evolving, so it's important to stay informed about the latest trends and developments in the digital world. Follow tech blogs, news websites, and social media accounts to stay up-to-date with the latest advancements.

Acquiring digital competence involves a combination of learning and practice. Here are some key steps to help English teachers develop and improve your digital competence: Take advantage of formal education, online courses, workshops, and training programs to learn about digital technologies and tools. Many organizations offer courses on topics such as digital literacy, data privacy and digital skills development. Explore online resources, tutorials, and guides to learn about specific digital tools and platforms. Websites like YouTube, Coursera, Udemy, and Khan Academy offer a wide range of tutorials on various digital skills. The best way to improve your digital competence is through hands-on practice. [2:1-20]. Experiment with different digital tools and platforms, try out new features, and explore different ways of using technology in your daily life. Working with others on digital projects can help you learn new skills and gain different perspectives.

A digital skill encompasses a range of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that enable individuals to effectively and responsibly use digital technologies in various contexts. The components of digital competence can be broadly categorized into the following areas: **digital literacy** including basic knowledge and understanding of digital technologies, such as how to use computers, mobile devices, software applications, and the internet. It also involves the ability to navigate online information, evaluate sources, and critically assess digital content.The next are technical skills that are specific ones related to using digital tools and platforms, such as coding, programming, web design, data analysis, digital marketing, and multimedia production. Technical skills enable individuals to create, manage, and manipulate digital content effectively.

When it comes to the information management, it involves the ability to search for, organize, analyze, and synthesize information from digital sources. It also includes skills related to data management, data privacy, and information security. Digital competence also includes skills for communicating and collaborating with others using digital technologies. This includes using email, messaging apps, social media, video conferencing tools, and online collaboration platforms.

The problem-solving and critical thinking skills are essential for effectively using digital technologies to solve problems, make decisions, and think creatively. Digital competence involves the ability to analyze complex situations, identify solutions, and adapt to changing circumstances.

Creativity and innovation is also one of the components of digital competence involving the ability to think creatively, generate new ideas, and innovate using digital tools. This includes skills for creating digital content, designing user interfaces, and developing new digital products or services. English teachers can enhance their own and their students' digital competence by incorporating the following strategies:

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Engaging in ongoing professional development opportunities to enhance digital skills and knowledge foreign language teachers ask their learners attend workshops, webinars, conferences, and courses focused on digital tools and technologies relevant to English teaching. Experimenting with a variety of digital tools and platforms that can enhance teaching and learning foreign languages, such as online learning management systems, interactive whiteboards, educational apps, digital storytelling tools, and virtual reality applications. [3:50-69].

In order to incorporate technology into lesson planning and delivery to create engaging and interactive learning experiences for students teachers should use digital resources, multimedia content, online collaboration tools, and virtual communication platforms to enhance English language skills. Digital learning resources, sometimes abbreviated as DLRs, are digital resources that help students and teachers in the learning process. Most digital learning resources are accessed through a connection to the internet. Technology in classrooms has become increasingly prevalent, as many secondary schools move to a one-to-one device model, as each student is issued a laptop or tablet upon admission. Smart Boards are becoming more common in many classrooms, which allow the teachers to interact with digital learning resources during their presentation of new content. This has created an immense impact on how students learn new information. As technology becomes a bigger part of students' lives, some teachers use digital resources to increase student engagement. Additionally, there are learning resources available that give access to information that would be otherwise unavailable. Access to the Internet provides a wide variety of digital learning resources to both teachers and students. Some are geared specifically toward helping either students or teachers, but many are meant to help both. Here are some examples:

Digital textbooks: Digital textbooks can be a cost-effective way to update the curriculum when necessary. They typically come equipped with helpful features, like interactive end-of-unit quizzes, search functions, and sources.

Online grade books and classrooms: Programs like Google Classroom, Blackboard, and the like are excellent organizational tools for teachers and students. Teachers can keep grade books, teaching materials, attendance, IEP information, and differentiation strategies organized all in one place. Students can choose to be alerted to upcoming assignments or newly posted material.

Interactive models: When physical models are difficult or impossible to obtain, many interactive models can be sourced online. For example, in an anatomy and physiology classroom, a cadaver lab would be impossible in the K-12 context. However, interactive models of the human body online can allow students to learn the same information in an interactive way. Teachers can also use these interactive models during their presentation of new content. Multimedia content typically includes a combination of different types of media, such as:
Text: Written content that may include information, instructions, or descriptions.
Images: Pictures, photographs, or graphics that enhance the visual aspect of the content.
Audio: Sound elements such as music, narration, or sound effects.
Video: Moving images that may include animation, live-action footage, or recorded presentations.
Animation: Animated graphics or videos that add a dynamic element to the content.
Interactive elements: Features that allow users to engage with the content, such as quizzes, games, or clickable links.
Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR): Immersive technologies that provide a more interactive and engaging experience for users.

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When selecting teaching materials to develop digital competence in students learning English, consider the following guidelines:
- Learning Objectives: Clearly define the digital competence skills you want your students to develop. This could include proficiency in using digital tools, critical thinking, information literacy, online collaboration, digital creativity, and responsible digital citizenship.
- Authenticity: Choose materials that reflect real-world digital contexts and situations. Look for resources that incorporate authentic language use, such as websites, blogs, social media platforms, and online articles.
- Relevance: Select materials that align with the interests and needs of your students. Consider their age, language proficiency level, and personal interests. Engaging content will motivate them to develop their digital skills.

- Interactive Tools: Include interactive materials that allow students to actively engage with the content. This can involve using educational apps, online quizzes, interactive videos, virtual reality experiences, or language learning platforms with gamified elements.
- Multimodal Content: Opt for materials that incorporate different forms of media such as text, images, audio, and video. This variety enhances engagement and caters to different learning styles.
- Collaboration Opportunities: Look for materials that promote online collaboration and communication. This could involve using discussion forums, video conferencing tools, or collaborative document editing platforms to encourage students to work together and share their ideas.
- Digital Safety and Ethics: Ensure that the selected materials address digital safety, privacy, and ethical considerations. Teach students about responsible online behavior, cyber bullying prevention, evaluating online sources for credibility, and respecting copyright laws.
- Ongoing Evaluation: Continuously assess the effectiveness of the selected materials in developing students' digital competence. Gather feedback from students and adapt your teaching approach accordingly.
English teachers should remember that the selection of teaching materials should be a dynamic process that evolves with technological advancements and the changing needs of your students.
The above enumerated components can be combined in various ways to create rich and engaging multimedia content across different platforms and mediums. Promoting digital literacy educators would prefer to teach students how to critically evaluate online information, navigate digital resources, and use digital tools effectively. Encourage them to develop skills for searching, analyzing, and synthesizing information from digital sources. Fostering students' creativity by integrating digital tools for creating multimedia projects, digital storytelling, podcasting, video production, and other creative activities also enhance language skills and digital competence. Here it is important to mention about facilitating collaborative learning experiences using digital platforms enabling students to work together on projects, share ideas, provide feedback, and engage in peer-to-peer communication. In such cases citizenship educational programmes teach students about responsible and ethical behavior in the digital world, including issues related to online safety, privacy, digital rights, and digital well-being. [4:1-8].

In conclusion, developing digital competence in teaching English is essential for educators to effectively engage and empower students in the digital age. By incorporating strategies such as ongoing professional development, exploring digital tools, integrating technology into lesson planning, promoting digital literacy, encouraging creativity, facilitating collaborative learning, teaching digital citizenship, utilizing digital feedback and assessment tools, staying current with

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educational technology trends, and collaborating with colleagues, English teachers can enhance their own digital skills and knowledge while fostering students' digital competence.

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