DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH SKILLS OF FUTURE ENGLISH TEACHERS IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITALIZATION OF EDUCATION

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Abstract: The rapid digitalization of education has transformed traditional pedagogical paradigms, necessitating the integration of advanced technological skills into teacher training. Future English teachers must not only master language pedagogy but also develop robust research skills, essential for adapting to dynamic educational landscapes. This paper explores the development of research skills among future English teachers in the context of digitalization, examining the impact of digital tools, online platforms, and the need for digital literacy. By analyzing recent studies and trends, this article highlights strategies for fostering research competencies that prepare English teachers to contribute effectively to academic discourse and improve teaching outcomes.

Keywords: research skills, digitalization of education, future English teachers, research competencies, digital tools

INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, education is undergoing a profound transformation. Digitalization is reshaping teaching and learning processes, introducing new tools and methodologies. In this context, the development of research skills among future English teachers becomes crucial. Research skills enable teachers to critically evaluate information, engage with academic literature, and innovate in their teaching practices. As the teaching profession increasingly embraces digital tools, educators must adapt to these changes, developing both digital literacy and research proficiency.

The aim of this article is to explore how digitalization impacts the development of research skills in future English teachers. It also seeks to provide insights into how teacher training programs can integrate digital tools to enhance research capabilities.

MaTERIALS AND METHODS

1. The Role of Research Skills in Teacher Training

Research skills are vital for teachers, as they facilitate evidence-based decision-making and support lifelong learning. For future English teachers, these skills are necessary to:

- **Critically evaluate language pedagogy:** Understanding the effectiveness of different teaching methods requires the ability to assess academic research.

- **Stay updated with linguistic and educational trends:** The field of English language teaching (ELT) is dynamic, with new methods, technologies, and theories continually emerging.

- **Engage in reflective practice:** Teachers who can analyze their own teaching practices and outcomes are better equipped to make informed changes that enhance learning experiences.

Effective research skills include data collection and analysis, critical reading, academic writing, and familiarity with research methodologies. For English teachers, additional competencies include linguistic analysis and the ability to navigate digital research databases.

2. Digitalization in Education: A New Paradigm

Digitalization refers to the integration of digital technologies into various aspects of education. In the classroom, this includes the use of online platforms, virtual classrooms, and educational software. For research, digitalization offers new avenues for data collection, collaboration, and access to scholarly resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in education, making online teaching and digital resources commonplace. For future English teachers, digitalization presents new opportunities for both teaching and research:

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- **Access to digital libraries and research databases:** Platforms such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and ERIC offer vast resources that support academic research.

- **Online collaboration:** Digital tools enable collaboration across borders, allowing future teachers to engage in international research projects.

- **Data collection and analysis tools:** Digital tools such as Google Forms, Vivo, and SPSS simplify the collection and analysis of data in educational research.

Digital literacy, the ability to navigate and utilize digital tools effectively, has become a core competency for teachers. Therefore, teacher education programs must incorporate training that equips future teachers with the skills to leverage digital tools in research.

3. The Impact of Digital Tools on Research Skill Development

The use of digital tools in teacher training programs enhances the development of research skills in several ways:

- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Digital tools facilitate easier data collection through surveys, interviews, and observations conducted online. Programs like Google Forms offer user-friendly interfaces for designing and distributing surveys. Statistical software such as SPSS or R helps in analyzing large datasets, thus fostering analytical thinking among future teachers.

- **Access to Research Resources:** Online databases, digital libraries, and academic repositories give students access to scholarly articles, books, and journals that they might not have had otherwise. Teachers are better equipped to stay current with research trends and engage in their own research.

- **Collaboration:** The digital world promotes collaborative research. Platforms like Google Workspace, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom allow future teachers to work together on research projects, facilitating teamwork and the exchange of ideas.

- **Publication and Dissemination:** Digital platforms enable future teachers to publish their research more easily through blogs, online journals, and conferences. This fosters a sense of accomplishment and opens up opportunities for peer feedback and recognition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Challenges in the Development of Research Skills in Digital Contexts

Despite the benefits, there are challenges in integrating digital tools into research skill development:

• **Digital Literacy Gaps:** Not all future teachers enter training programs with the same level of digital literacy. This can hinder the effective use of digital research tools and slow down the development of research skills.

• **Information Overload:** The abundance of information available online can make it difficult for students to critically evaluate sources, discern credible research, and avoid misinformation.

• **Technical Barriers:** Access to technology, including reliable internet and advanced software, can be uneven, particularly for students in underfunded programs or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Addressing these challenges requires teacher education programs to provide targeted training in digital literacy and information evaluation. Additionally, institutions must ensure that students have access to the necessary digital tools and infrastructure.

2. Strategies for Developing Research Skills in a Digital Age

To enhance the development of research skills among future English teachers, teacher education programs can implement the following strategies:

• **Incorporating Digital Research Tools:** Ensure that research methodologies courses include training on digital tools for data collection, analysis, and publication.

• **Promoting Digital Literacy:** Offer workshops or modules specifically aimed at improving digital literacy, covering topics such as evaluating online sources, using digital libraries, and mastering academic writing tools.

• **Encouraging Collaborative Research:** Foster collaboration by incorporating group research projects, where students can work together using digital platforms. This can simulate real-world research collaboration and improve peer learning.

- **Mentorship and Feedback:** Pair future teachers with experienced researchers or mentors who can guide them through the research process, providing feedback on the use of digital tools and research methodologies.

CONCLUSION

In the context of the digitalization of education, the development of research skills among future English teachers is crucial for their professional growth and adaptability. Digital tools offer significant opportunities to enhance these skills, though challenges related to digital literacy and access must be addressed. Teacher education programs play a pivotal role in integrating digital tools into their curricula to foster research competencies that will enable future English teachers to thrive in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

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