THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL LITERACY AND HOW TO DEVELOP IT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The significance of digital literacy for pupils is becoming increasingly clear as technology continues to permeate both children's and adults' everyday lives. The capacity to use technology efficiently has become crucial for modern success in everything from social relations to entertainment to education. New teaching and learning methods in the classroom are also made possible by digital literacy. Students are learning new techniques for interacting with their interests through the internet and other digital media. When it comes to reading or discovering more about potential interests, they are no longer limited to only physical text. This scientific article will analyze what "digital literacy" means, and how to develop digital literacy and make it common among pupils. To achieve this, teachers should have actual knowledge and methodology about digital literacy.

Keywords: digital literacy, digital tools, online security, comprehension methods, print literacies, digital literacy programs.

Introduction

Over the past several years, there has been a significant development in the concept of what it means to be "literate." There was an overall definition for "literacy" as " it is the ability to read, write and do mathematical skills basically in the past. Now that technology and the internet have advanced, literacy has transformed into digital literacy. Social media networks and online learning tools must now be accessible to students. We must first examine the definition of digital literacy before attempting to describe the reasons why it is important in education. "The ability to appropriately use digital tools and facilities to locate, manage, integrate, assess, synthesize, and communicate with others while constructing new knowledge, producing media expressions, and interacting with others in the context of particular life situations is known as digital literacy. It also refers to an individual's awareness of these skills and their attitude toward using them to promote positive social action" Martin (2006), page 19. There are several reasons why we should emphasize digital literacy:

1. Encourage educational advancement

The growing use of technology in education is one of the primary reasons digital literacy is crucial. In the past 15 years, the use of technology as a learning aid has increased, with platforms like computers, tablets, and the internet becoming more common in primary schools.

Students who are proficient in digital literacy will feel more at ease and confident using these platforms for learning, whereas students who are not proficient in this area may find it difficult or unnerving to use the relevant technology, which might hinder their progress.

2. Boost Online Security

Online hazards are intricate and dynamic, with malicious individuals or organizations always coming up with new schemes to exploit others. While digital literacy cannot guarantee that children won't encounter online safety issues, it can provide them with critical information, resources, processes, and tools to assist safeguard their safety and privacy as much as possible.

3. Acknowledge Digital Responsibilities

Digital literacy emphasizes the value of digital responsibility, or the capacity to interact and consume information online in an ethical manner, in addition to online safety. Students who use technology more often have difficulties with copyright and plagiarism, cyberbullying, vetting informative sites, and social responsibility. Students who possess strong digital literacy abilities are better able to comprehend and deal with these difficulties, which helps them become more responsible online citizens.

4. Increase Online Equity

The fact that it aids in closing the digital divide is another factor in the significance of digital literacy. Even with the widespread use of technology in homes and schools, there are still disproportionately many minority employees who lack basic digital literacy abilities. Institutions may boost digital literacy among underrepresented groups and upskill these students so they may have more professional possibilities in the future by making digital literacy a priority in primary education.

As digital literacy plays such a role in education, numerous appropriate activities and programs which promote digital literacy in the classroom should be applied.

According to studies by Black and William (2005) and others, a variety of classroom-based assessments, including projects, portfolio reviews, oral presentations, and self-evaluations, can all help students learn more and perform better on standardized examinations. These evaluation tools—often referred to as "assessment for learning" tools—are perfectly suited to digital literacy activities, which are frequently more participatory than traditional classroom teaching and learning (NCCA, Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools, 2007).

Additionally, emphasizing critical thinking, using social media to interact with others, teaching how to avoid and detect plagiarism, helping students to keep their online identity, and providing authentic contexts for practice can be helpful to increase digital literacy.

Besides those suggestions there are some points should be taken into account while pupils are doing digital literacy activities:

- Provide chances for a guided reading practice where comprehension methods are modeled and children are encouraged to explain which tactics should be employed and why to improve reading comprehension in digital contexts.

- Include chances for substantial reading and writing in your digital literacy programs (for instance, by having kids read extensively about a new subject or have them write a report on what they did).

- Choose 5–6 important vocabulary terms or phrases for each digital literacy exercise, and teach them to students in person. Continue to review these brand-new words in your vocabulary.

- Encourage kids to explain what they are doing while using their digital literacy skills, as well as how they may apply what they have learned in other situations (e.g., in dealing with print literacies).

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