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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **The Role of English Teachers in the Digital Age: A Closer Look**

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**| ABSTRACT**

There was a time when students were mainly dependent on the teacher and learning and teaching were limited to the classroom. The role of the teacher was considered crucial, but now, in the digital age, the role of the teacher has changed. In the days before the digital age, a highly motivated student would listen to BBC News, watch English movies and buy English newspapers and books. But in the 21st century, it is not just about the classroom, notebooks and textbook. After the invention of the internet and digital media, English learning and teaching have entered a new era. We thank technology for providing us with great opportunities to ignite interest in students and motivate them. As an English teacher, we should change our attitude from traditional methods to modern methods and use modern educational technology. The article discusses the importance of digital tools in English teacher education and the need for effective and appropriate management of technology. It explores the knowledge and skills that English language teachers need to possess in the digital era, including their roles in using digital tools and developing their competence in the hypermedia environment. This is fundamental to effective teaching and approaches to language teacher education.

**| KEYWORDS**

digital age, 21st century, invention of internet, new era, technology, digital tools, hypermedia

**| ARTICLE INFORMATION**

**ACCEPTED:** 02 January 2025

**PUBLISHED:** 19 February 2025

**DOI:** 10.32996/ijllt.2025.8.2.12

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### **1. Introduction**

With the advent of the digital era and the rapid growth of technologies in all areas of life, there has been a lot of discussion and debate about the role of the teacher. People often ask whether or not having a teacher is important anymore. Are human teachers being replaced by advances in technology, the widespread use of the internet and smart learning apps, or are they being replaced by human teachers? The answer to all these questions is a resounding NO. The role of the teacher in a student's life has actually increased in the digital era, although with a few modifications in the way of teaching.

Now, with so much outside influence, it is even more important for teachers to lead students in the correct direction. Teachers must present the right facts to students, teens and young adults and help them understand the difference between right and wrong.

Now more than ever, English-language educators understand the value of using digital tools to teach students in a wide range of ways. The current situation has forced schools, universities and, institutes and colleges around the world to reevaluate their teaching and learning methods. Teaching with technology has gone from a slow and steady process to a sudden avalanche of digital tools, which can be overwhelming for teachers who have only taught in the face to face format.

### **2. Technology and Language Learning & Teaching**

Technology enables the teacher to utilize digital tools in the teaching process and in the language learning process. It enables and supports the educational file to overcome the difficulties of digital teaching in the digital age. In the digital age, learners are not

only prepared for the unknown of the future but also build their self-esteem and security as users of digital technologies. In the internet era, technology is seen as the best instrument for language education and learning that focuses on the learner and promotes a functional and learner-oriented approach. (Richards & Smith, 2002) argued that Computer in language learning works in parallel with learning through other media. It utilises the tools available on the computer (e.g., reading a text on a computer). Furthermore, (Kiliçkaya & Seferoglu, 2013) indicated that Computer technology can help the students to enhance their language skills. It is true that technology has a positive impact on the learning process. For example, Zhytska (2012) suggested that technology can have a positive impact on experiential learning, motivation, student achievement, authentic materials for learning, greater interaction, individualization, independence from a single source of information, and global understanding. In addition, Sung (2016) and Cong-Lem (2018) found that technology and web devices had a positive impact on students' learning and verbal performance. Han (2008) suggested that computer technology can promote learning interaction between learners and teachers and can help classroom teaching with a wide range of materials and approaches.

### **3. Traditional English Teaching**

As times have changed, traditional English teaching methods are no longer able to meet the learning requirements of modern students in a variety of ways, and they need to be improved with the help of new technologies. Below is a list of common challenges that traditional English teaching methods face.

### **4. Digital Literate**

Teachers who are technologically illiterate will never be able to give "critical power" to their students to become "revolutionary human beings" so they are unable to explore its potential. Teachers who are technologically stammered will reduce their credibility in front of their students so they tend to be "underestimated" as if they are a crazy person in the middle of a big city. It's a reality that's all around us. While some teachers are part of the so-called "90s generation", they need to stay up-to-date and update their knowledge with the latest technology.

Today's generation is characterized by a speed of life, and no one has the patience for it. The old adage of "slow and slow wins the race" has lost its meaning. Technology and gadgets are everywhere, and teachers who are responsible for teaching this generation need to keep up with the expectations of these hyper-active young people. If information is not shared correctly, it can have dire consequences. Young students are exposed to digital technology from a very young age, and they need to be taught how to use it correctly and how to get the most out of the digital knowledge available. Teachers have a key role to play in this regard. They must equip their students with the necessary digital skills to help them become responsible online citizens.

### **5. Professional Development**

One of the most important factors in increasing teachers' skills and confidence in using digital technologies is professional development. However, inadequate and inadequate technology training, whether in the teacher education program or in the professional development process, may prevent teachers from fully utilizing digital technologies and integrating them into their classrooms. Unfortunately, many teachers in developed and developing countries are facing a lack of digital learning opportunities. Most knowledge-based tasks rely heavily on technology. However, the challenge lies in the fact that these skills must be embedded in the knowledge domain where the activity is performed. For example, real estate agents need to be able to use geographic information systems to track sales and prices in various geographic areas. Welders need to know how to use a computer to control robots that examine and repair pipes. Radiologists need to be familiar with new technologies that 'read' and 'analyze' MRI scans. Therefore, the utilization of digital technology must be combined with and assessed through the subject-area knowledge-base.

### **6. Teacher's Role in the Digital Age**

In this digital age, a teacher working at a higher education institution must understand the difference between "learning about" and "learning to be" and implement the latter for the successful learning of the learners. The learner should be involved in the discipline that is intended for learning to be, i.e., if they are enrolled in a teacher education program, they should have direct exposure to teaching abilities. The digital realm can be used by the learner for content exploration to create lessons in digital form, and the role of the teacher from the technical to the teaching point will be essential. The role of the teacher broadens to develop the students' critical thinking, creative and scientific skills to develop them into lifelong learners and leaders.

The role of the teacher is to provide the learner with advanced knowledge and skills (e.g., blended learning, expert lectures, seminars, workshops, etc.). The teacher can play a key role in preparing a comprehensive repository that includes information on academic, personal, psycho-social support, and guidance services (e.g. professional counseling, mentoring/academic guidance, etc.). Teachers should use e-book resources to enhance the teaching-learning experience.

Teachers who are tech-savvy need to be able to empower and allow themselves and their learners to use different tools and technology for better teaching-learning. They need to develop their skills in teaching approaches that are compatible with digital technology. Content and knowledge management is an essential skill for teachers to succeed in the digital world. They need to choose, create, and enhance teaching-learning materials in digital format and with anytime-anywhere mode.

Now, with the advent of technology, the role of the teacher has changed. The assessment of the student's learning has moved beyond the boundaries of the four walls of the classroom. Now, the learner receives information and knowledge through the digital window; therefore, their assessment will need to be designed in this way only. Here, the role of a teacher is to collaborate with students and, other mentors and teachers around the world.

In this digital age, the role of the teacher has changed from one of preaching to one of managing students social and emotional behaviors; mentoring their learning and overall development as a balanced citizen; motivating the slow learner and the fast learner in the digital world; monitoring the learner's time for proper time management to ensure they use e-recourses optimally; addressing social and emotional issues affecting the learning process; and being prepared to make changes when the learner stumbles.

The role of an online teacher is to lead students through at least one online learning experience. Different online learners have different ways of learning and prefer different learning modes. Therefore, online teachers must adjust the way they teach to meet the needs of each learner. Technology allows teachers to upgrade their knowledge faster through online courses or YouTube channels. They can also discover solutions to problems collaboratively and use search engines to enrich their lessons. Teachers should act as a quality and quantity filter for the huge amount of information available on the internet.

### 7. Improving teachers 'digital skills

Digital skills are a must-have for any teacher in today's world. They allow you to create engaging and impactful learning experiences for your students. However, building digital skills can be difficult, particularly for teachers who aren't well-versed in the latest technology and tools. Followings are some ways to develop digital literacy for teachers.

- Focus on the skills you need to work on and set clear and measurable goals.
- Find the best and most up-to-date tools to help you develop and hone your digital skills.
- Take this new understanding and apply it to your teaching practice by creating and implementing digital learning programs, using various tools and platforms, and exploring new teaching techniques.
- Get feedback from others about your knowledge of digital literacy.
- Work with people who share the same values and goals as you.
- keep up to date with the latest trends and developments in the field of digital learning
- Have a positive outlook on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).
- Understand how ICT can be used in the education field.
- Know how ICT will be used in their field of expertise.
- Be able to use ICT effectively in their work (e.g. text editor, email, internet browsing, etc.).
- Learn how to plan the curriculum with ICT in mind.
- Create training activities for students who are considering using ICT for their work.
- Consistently assess ICT usage.

### 8. Conclusion & Recommendation

Digital tools have revolutionized English language teaching, providing unlimited information about teaching and learning activities. Teachers need to possess the knowledge and skills of ICT tools to engage learners effectively. Digital tools have the potential to innovate, accelerate, enrich and deepen skills to motivate and engage students. English teachers believe digital technology positively impacts their teaching and learning process, but face challenges in adapting to change and adapting to technology. They need to develop professional learning and technical competence to use various computer applications for educational purposes. Researchers should focus on teachers' digital competence development in order to face digital teaching challenges.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declare no conflict of interest.

**Acknowledgements:** The author extend his appreciation to the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Khalid University, Abha, KSA, for funding this work through the General Research Project under grant number (GRP/59/45)

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