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THE CONCEPT OF DIGITAL LITERACY AND ITS ROLE IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT:

Digital literacy refers to an individual's ability to effectively use digital technologies, analyze information, and communicate in digital environments. In the 21st century, the importance of digital literacy in education has significantly increased, as it directly influences students' academic performance, critical thinking skills, and preparedness for future careers. This article examines the

key components of digital literacy, its role in the education system, assessment indicators, and methods for integrating digital skills into teaching practices. Additionally, the article explores how digital literacy can be adapted to national curricula and its overall impact on the learning process.

INTRODUCTION. In today's globalized world, digital literacy has become one of the key competencies required for academic success and professional development. The rapid advancement of technology has transformed how information is accessed, processed, and shared. As a result, educational institutions must integrate digital literacy into the learning process to equip students with essential skills

【1,15–47-b】.

Digital literacy is not limited to basic computer skills; it also includes information evaluation, responsible online communication, and protection against cyber threats. Many countries have recognized the importance of digital education, including Uzbekistan, which has introduced strategic reforms to develop students' digital competencies【3,132–149-b】.

The enrichment of educational content through digital tools is an essential part of modern pedagogy. This study explores the structure of digital literacy education, its integration into continuous learning, and strategies for enhancing digital skills in students【5,24–35-b】.

MAIN COMPONENTS OF DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital literacy consists of three major components:

1. Technical Skills (Technological Domain)

Proficiency in using computers, smartphones, and digital platforms.

Familiarity with software applications, cloud storage, and online collaboration tools【2,67–92-b】.

2. Cognitive Abilities (Analytical Domain)

Information literacy: The ability to search, evaluate, and verify online information.

Critical thinking: Identifying credible sources and detecting misinformation.

Cybersecurity awareness: Understanding online risks, data privacy, and protection from digital threats【3,132–149-b】.

3. Practical Application (Contextual Domain)

Applying digital skills to real-world problems.

Understanding digital ethics and responsible online behavior.

Engaging in digital communication while ensuring data security

【4,58–77-b】.

The inclusion of these domains in education ensures that students are not only users of technology but also critical thinkers who can navigate digital environments effectively.

DIGITAL LITERACY IN DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL STAGES

Digital literacy can be integrated into various levels of the education system:

1. Primary Education: Teaching children's basic digital skills, such as using educational applications. Introducing safe internet practices to protect against online risks.

2. Secondary Education: Encouraging students to use digital tools for research and project-based learning. Teaching students how to analyze information critically and distinguish reliable sources.

3. Higher Education: Integrating digital methodologies into academic research and professional training. Using advanced digital tools, such as data analysis software, e-learning platforms, and artificial intelligence applications.

Digital literacy at all these stages helps students become independent learners who can adapt to technological changes throughout their lives.

ASSESSMENT OF DIGITAL LITERACY to measure digital literacy skills, international standards use the following classification:

1. High Level (Above 625 Points):

Strong ability to analyze and apply digital knowledge in various fields. Proficiency in digital problem-solving, cybersecurity, and professional software usage.

2. Intermediate Level (475–625 Points):

Ability to use digital tools effectively for learning and research. Awareness of cybersecurity risks but with limited expertise in advanced security measures.

3. Basic Level (400–475 Points):

Understanding of basic digital tools and internet use. Difficulty in identifying misinformation and securing online data.

4. Minimal Level (Below 400 Points):

Struggles with digital navigation and information analysis. Lack of awareness regarding online security and digital ethics.

Assessing digital literacy skills allows educational institutions to develop targeted programs that address students' specific needs.

IMPACT OF DIGITAL LITERACY ON EDUCATION

Enhancing digital literacy in the education system contributes to:

Improved Learning Outcomes: Digital tools enhance engagement and comprehension through interactive methods.

Better Critical Thinking Skills: Exposure to diverse digital resources fosters independent problem-solving and analytical abilities.

Enhanced Job Readiness: Students with strong digital skills are better prepared for future careers in technology-driven industries.

Increased Awareness of Cybersecurity: Proper digital literacy training helps students navigate the online world safely and responsibly.

By fostering digital literacy, education systems can create a technologically competent generation ready to face modern challenges.

CONCLUSION: Digital literacy is a fundamental component of 21st-century education. It plays a crucial role in shaping students into informed, responsible, and technologically capable individuals. The successful integration of digital literacy into curricula strengthens national education systems and enhances global competitiveness. As digital technologies continue to evolve, educational institutions must remain proactive in adapting teaching methods to equip students with essential digital skills.

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