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THE CHANGING ROLE OF TEACHERS IN THE DIGITAL AGE: FROM KNOWLEDGE TRANSMITTER TO LEARNING FACILITATOR

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Abstract

The digital transformation of education redefines the role of the teacher, requiring new competencies and adaptability to emerging technologies. This article analyses key changes in pedagogical practices, emphasizing the need for digital competencies and innovative teaching approaches. The following literature review synthesizes and analyses existing research on this specific topic, providing an overview of key findings. Additionally, the article highlights the danger of the teacher transforming into an entertainer or **edutainer**, where the focus on engaging students through entertainment may come at the cost of meaningful learning and their role as an **assertentainer** - a figure who balances authority with active student involvement in the learning process.

Keywords: ***digital pedagogy, teacher transformation, edutainment vs. engagement, assertive teaching, digital competencies, pedagogical adaptation.***

Introduction

In the context of the digital revolution, the role of the teacher is no longer limited to information transmission but has evolved into that of a facilitator of active and personalized learning. The digitalization of education and increased access to technology demanded a redefinition of teaching methods and teacher-student interactions (Selwyn, 2022). Traditionally viewed as knowledge transmitters, teachers must now embrace a multifaceted role that includes being facilitators, mentors, and digital pedagogues. The increasing reliance on online learning,

artificial intelligence, and digital tools demands new competencies, challenging educators to redefine their approach to teaching. Catalano, Albulescu, and Stan (2020) emphasize that effective training programs are pivotal in enhancing teachers' competencies, enabling them to integrate digital technologies into their pedagogical practices and meet the diverse needs of modern learners. They argue that such programs should be tailored to address specific professional requirements, thereby fostering a more personalized and effective learning experience for educators. This paper examines the evolving role of teachers in the digital age, exploring the competencies required, the transformation of teaching methods, and the challenges encountered during this shift taking into account that in the contemporary educational discourse, there is a growing concern regarding the evolving role of teachers, particularly about the shift from traditional educators to entertainers or "edutainers." This transformation raises questions about the balance between maintaining authority and fostering genuine student engagement.

1. New Competencies of Teachers in the Digital Age

To address the challenges of digital education, teachers must develop skills in a lot of areas starting with **digital competencies** taking into account that they are in the urgent need of using the ability to integrate technology effectively into teaching meaning utilizing e-learning platforms and managing digital resources (Redecker, 2017). Moreover, teachers should bring i**nnovative pedagogies** in classrooms like integrating active methods such as flipped classrooms, gamification and active learning strategies (Laurillard, 2020). In terms of digital assessment, teachers should adapt more to **AI and data-driven teaching** in order to use data analytics for personalized learning experiences (Luckin et al., 2018). Also, implementing online tests and automated feedback (Kirkwood & Price, 2016) becomes very important. The use of AI in education is transforming teaching methodologies, enabling adaptive learning models that cater to individual student needs. AI-powered tools such as intelligent tutoring systems analyse vast amounts of student data, offering real-time feedback and personalized learning pathways. These technologies enhance students' understanding by identifying gaps in knowledge and suggesting tailored resources. However, the implementation of AI in education also presents challenges, such as ensuring data privacy, addressing algorithmic biases, and maintaining human oversight in decision-making processes. Teachers must also be trained in interpreting AI-generated insights and incorporating them effectively into lesson plans. We are discussing here about **ethical awareness** meaning understanding issues related to digital

privacy and AI biases (Williamson & Eynon, 2020). Last but not least teachers should have good **socio-emotional skills** to offer students support in the online environment to prevent isolation and anxiety (Bozkurt et al., 2020). The digital learning environment, while offering numerous advantages, also poses significant challenges to students' emotional and psychological well-being. Remote learning and increased screen time can lead to social isolation, anxiety, and diminished motivation. Teachers must develop socio-emotional skills to create an inclusive and supportive digital classroom. Strategies such as regular check-ins, fostering peer collaboration, and integrating mindfulness activities can help mitigate these challenges. In a nutshell, digital tools should be used to enhance rather than replace human interaction, ensuring that students receive adequate emotional support. Research indicates that a balance between technology and human engagement leads to better educational outcomes and improved student well-being.

2. Transformation of Teaching Methods

Catalano, Albulescu, and Stan (2024) highlight the importance of adopting a child-centered approach through the principles of slow education. This methodology advocates for a deliberate and thoughtful educational process, allowing children ample time to explore and understand concepts deeply, thereby supporting holistic personality development. By embracing this approach, educators can create learning environments that prioritize individual student needs and promote meaningful engagement. *Slow education* is an educational philosophy that emphasizes depth of learning, patience, and a student-centred approach. Inspired by the broader *Slow Movement* (such as Slow Food), Slow Education challenges the fast-paced, standardized, and efficiency-driven models of traditional schooling. Instead of rushing through curricula to meet rigid timelines, *slow education* advocates for allowing students adequate time to deeply understand concepts, think critically, and engage meaningfully with learning materials. (Holt, 2002). In the context of digital learning, Slow Education can be integrated by ensuring that technology enhances meaningful learning rather than overwhelming students with information. Digital storytelling, project-based learning, and personalized e-learning tools align well with Slow Education principles by allowing learners to engage with content at their own pace and in a thoughtful manner. Additionally, the integration of digital storytelling in early childhood education is identified as an effective strategy to promote child-centeredness. Catalano and colleagues suggest that digital storytelling not only enhances technological skills but also

encourages creativity and critical thinking among young learners. This approach aligns with the contemporary shift towards incorporating digital tools to enrich educational experiences.

Going furher into the research **hybrid and adaptive learning** have emerged as innovative approaches in education, blending traditional methods with technological advancements to enhance learning experiences. The hybrid learning model combines face-to-face teaching with online environments, allowing for greater personalization of educational content (Hodges et al., 2020). Hybrid learning, also known as blended learning, integrates face-to-face instruction with online components, offering flexibility and accessibility. This model allows students to engage with course materials both in-person and remotely, catering to diverse learning preferences. Recent studies have highlighted the benefits and challenges associated with hybrid learning environments. For instance, a systematic review in higher education identified that while hybrid teaching combines the advantages of technology with face-to-face interactions, it also presents challenges such as technological issues and time management for both educators and learners. (Gudoniene, 2025). Another study (Raes, 2021) that presents a concept that has been already developed before Covid-19 to happen, shows the results of three types of presence in simultaneous learning - on campus, remote by interactions and remote by listening to recorded course. It explored student and teacher experiences, emphasizing the need for effective engagement strategies in hybrid classrooms. From the student perspective, this study found no significant differences in conceptual understanding between those attending in person and those participating remotely. However, on-site students demonstrated higher levels of affective engagement, while remote students benefited from increased opportunities for interaction. Aligned with the ACAD framework, the findings highlight that effective learning and teaching activities are closely linked to set, epistemic, and social design decisions, emphasizing the importance of thoughtful instructional design in hybrid learning environments. On the other hand, adaptive learning utilizes technology to personalize education by adjusting content and assessments based on individual learner performance. This approach aims to provide tailored learning experiences that address each student's unique needs. A systematic review of adaptive learning research highlighted various instructional contexts and methodologies, indicating the potential of adaptive strategies to enhance educational outcomes. (Martin, 2020). Furthermore, the rise of hybrid and blended learning models has transformed educational practices by combining the strengths of in-person and online learning. Technological advancements such as AI, adaptive learning platforms, and virtual reality are reshaping the delivery of hybrid education by offering personalized learning

experiences, automating assessments, and creating interactive simulations. (Mulenga, 2025). Additionally, advancements in artificial intelligence have led to the development of adaptive learning environments that customize content delivery, thereby supporting sustainable educational transformation. (Kumar, 2024). We couldn't come to an end without mentioning the one that is reshaping educational practices meaning the use of artificial intelligence in education. There is no doubt that AI-based technologies help us in offering personalized learning, providing automated support for students (Luckin et al., 2018). The same idea is issued by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, that underlines how AI can facilitate personalized learning experiences by adapting educational content to meet individual student needs, thereby enhancing learning outcomes. AI has the potential to revolutionize educational methodologies by automating administrative tasks, thereby allowing educators to focus more on pedagogy and student engagement. For instance, AI-driven tools can assist in grading, scheduling, and resource allocation, streamlining operations within educational institutions. The integration of AI tools in education has seen a significant uptick among students. A recent survey revealed that a lot of students have utilized AI applications such as ChatGPT to aid their studies, marking a substantial increase from previous years. This tool is primarily employed for tasks like summarizing information, enhancing grammar comprehension by providing explanations, written expression, and vocabulary expansion, thereby augmenting the learning process. (Dochia, 2024) Another recent review discussed how AI-driven adaptive learning contributes to sustainable educational transformation, emphasizing the importance of addressing ethical considerations and privacy concerns. (Kumar, 2024). Still, the trajectory of AI in education suggests a continued evolution toward more sophisticated and integrated applications. Another current study explored the dynamic interplay between AI, analytics, and learning processes, with the goal of developing systems that not only support educational delivery but also enhance our understanding of learning itself. (Cukurova, 2024). The above-mentioned paper advocates for a broader, interdisciplinary approach to AI in education, one that integrates AI with human intelligence in a meaningful way rather than just automating traditional teaching and learning processes.

3. Challenges and Resistance to Change

Resistance to change is a multifaceted phenomenon that organizations frequently encounter during transformation initiatives. Understanding its underlying causes and developing effective strategies to address it are crucial for successful change implementation. This phenomenon is

a significant challenge within educational institutions also, hindering the implementation of necessary reforms and innovations in order to foster a culture of continuous improvement in education. The adoption of technology in education faces many obstacles related to individual, interpersonal, organizational factors and AI ethics concerns. Educators may resist change due to fear of the unknown, perceived threats to job security, or a low tolerance for change. Personal predispositions, such as a general reluctance to adapt, can also play a role. For instance, teachers with more experience may display resistance to switching from traditional methods to innovative approaches (Kılıçoğlu, 2018). In terms of interpersonal factors, it is demonstrated that resistance can be influenced by social dynamics within the educational environment, including group norms and peer pressure. The relationships and communication patterns among staff members significantly impact how change is received (Kılıçoğlu, 2018). Here the organizational factors come in front line taking into account that educational institutions with rigid hierarchies or a history of unsuccessful change initiatives may face heightened resistance. As noted by Kılıçoğlu (2018), organizations by their nature are resistant to change, often due to structural inertia and established power relationships. As we have discussed above, despite its benefits, the adoption of AI in education presents several challenges. Concerns regarding academic integrity have surfaced, as the misuse of AI tools could facilitate dishonest practices. We should not ignore issues related to data privacy and the potential for algorithmic biases that need a lot of attention. It is imperative for educational institutions to establish clear guidelines and provide training to ensure the ethical and effective use of AI technologies. For example, the UK's Department for Education has already published guidelines on the application of generative AI in educational settings, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that leverages AI's advantages while mitigating potential risks. **(**UK Department for Education, 2024). But the most important fact is the concept of teachers adopting an entertainer's role that has gained importance, especially with the increasing demand for engaging instructional methods. While integrating entertainment elements can capture students' attention, it poses the risk of overshadowing educational content. Blazer (2014) discusses that in an era where students often seek instant gratification, educators may feel compelled to become entertainers rather than traditional teachers. Similarly, the "edutainer's dilemma" highlights scenarios where the pursuit of engagement compromises learning outcomes, as educators might prioritize entertainment over substantive content.

4. Conclusion

The modern teacher must expand their skills set to fulfil the role of a learning facilitator. Integrating technology into education requires a shift in mindset and continuous development of digital competencies. Maintaining a balance between teacher authority and student engagement is crucial for effective learning environments. The relational dynamics between teachers and students significantly influence classroom authority and autonomy. For instance, a study examining teacher authority development emphasizes the importance of care, respect, and trust in fostering legitimate authority, which in turn enhances student engagement. (Wubbels, Brekelmans, den Brok, & van Tartwijk, 2006). Moreover, the tension between student agencies and teacher authority in inquiry-based classrooms underscores the need for educators to guide learning while allowing students to take ownership of their educational journey. (Tan & Wong, 2012). To address the challenges of balancing authority with engagement, the notion of the teacher as an "assertentainer" emerges—an educator who combines assertiveness with entertaining elements to actively involve students without compromising educational integrity. This approach aligns with the perspective that while entertainment can lead students to engagement, it should not replace the core educational objectives. Schlechty (2011) asserts that engaged students and teachers derive joy and pleasure from their activities without the necessity of being entertained, suggesting that a blend of engagement and entertainment can be effective when used judiciously. The role of teachers has undergone a profound transformation in the digital age, shifting from the traditional position of knowledge transmitter to that of a learning facilitator. This shift is not just a response to technological advancements, but a natural progression in educational philosophy that aligns with the evolving needs of students and the world around them. In the past, teachers were the central figures in the classroom, responsible for delivering knowledge directly to students, often through lectures and other forms of direct instruction. This model, although effective in its time, has increasingly been questioned in light of the digital revolution, which has made vast amounts of information readily available at students' fingertips. In the digital age, students are no longer passive recipients of information but active participants in their learning process. With the rise of technology and access to the internet, students have the tools to explore, research, and learn independently. In this context, the teacher's role has shifted towards guiding, supporting, and facilitating the learning process. This shift from knowledge transmitter to learning facilitator also ties into a broader pedagogical change that emphasizes student agency and active learning. Teachers are increasingly recognizing the importance of creating

environments where students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning journey. This can be seen in the rise of inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and other student-centered approaches that encourage exploration and collaboration. Teachers, in this new model, provide the structure and guidance necessary for students to ask questions, explore answers, and develop problem-solving skills, but it is the students themselves who take the lead in determining the direction of their learning. At the heart of this transformation is the growing recognition that education is not just about transferring facts and information; it is about equipping students with the skills and mindset they need to thrive in a complex, ever-changing world. Teachers, therefore, must foster an environment where students develop not only knowledge but also the skills necessary to navigate and make sense of the world around them. This includes critical thinking, adaptability, creativity, and collaboration—skills that are indispensable in the digital age.

All in all, the digital age has fundamentally reshaped the role of teachers. As technology continues to evolve, teachers must adapt by embracing new teaching methodologies and tools, shifting from being the sole knowledge holders to becoming facilitators of learning. This requires not only an understanding of technology but also a commitment to fostering a classroom culture that values collaboration and critical thinking. As teachers navigate this changing landscape, they must strike a balance between leveraging technology, maintaining authority, and ensuring that education remains meaningful and relevant in an increasingly complex world.

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