

The current situation of digital skills in online teaching of pedagogical students at TNUE

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Abstract:

Online teaching method is an important solution to improve the quality of education from pre-school to university, especially in the time of Covid-19. To improve online teaching methods, it is necessary to improve digital skills in online teaching for pedagogical students while still studying and researching at university. This paper discusses the documents on the concepts of e-teaching, online teaching; the purposes, meanings and benefits of solutions to support teachers and pedagogical students to improve their digital skills in online teaching. The aim of this study is to survey on the current situation of digital skills in online teaching of pedagogical students at TNUE (Thai Nguyen University of Education). The participants of the study were 4th year students majoring in English at TNUE.

The study collected the students' attitude on developing digital skills in online teaching in the current context and their abilities in using online teaching software and tools; then suggested solutions to improve and enhance their online teaching skills. The findings of the study would be useful for pedagogical students at TNUE in particular as well as for teachers in general.

Key Word: online teaching methods, digital skills, pedagogical students, online teaching software, teaching tools.

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I. Introduction

In recent times, with the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, many studies have been carried out to show that the majority of teachers have been forced to leave their normal workplace and use computers with their own Internet connection to teach online without the initial or on-the-job training required to use these new technologies. These teachers feel obligated to confront these brand new distance learning methods for which they have not been trained. This shows that creating opportunities for teachers to access, learn and guide on how to use software and tools in online teaching will more or less help them effectively perform their assigned tasks OECD (2020).

John Swinney (2016) did a study called 'Enhancing learning and teaching through the use of digital technology, a digital learning and teaching strategy for Scotland'. Research has shown activities to enhance teaching and learning through digital applications, in which updating the enhanced curriculum focusing on developing digital skills for students is very important. . He said that in order to build confidence and capacity for pedagogical students, the school should focus on providing good infrastructure and support in the development of technology and digital skills for students. The skillful implementation of digital technology in schools will ensure that people develop a level of general and professional digital skills that are so important for learning, living and working in a globalized world.

In addition, ClaudiuComan and the authors (2020) conducted a study on online teaching and learning during the Covid epidemic at a University in Romania. Research has shown that training programs for teachers need to be developed to help them adapt to changes and understand the future of education. Many studies around the world have been carried out to find creative approaches to develop digital skills for pedagogical students. Therefore, in the research paper, the researcher studied "The current situation of digital skills in online teaching of pedagogical students at TNUE" with the hope that the researcher could suggest effective solutions to improve and enhance pedagogical students' online teaching skills.

II. Material And Methods

The aim of this study was to investigate the current situation of digital skills in online teaching of pedagogical students at TNUE and provide some suggestions for students to improve their online teaching skills. The researcher used questionnaire to collect information.

Participants

54 students majoring in English at TNUE were selected to participate in the study. They are 52 females and 2 males at the age range of 21-23 who have learnt English at school for 3-7 years. Their proficiency level is estimated at B2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Most of them have decided to become English teachers after graduation; hence, they get a lot of efforts for online teaching skills development.

Research design and data collection instruments

The researcher arranged a discussion with 54 4th year English majors to launch the study. Participants were given general information about how the treatment would be carried out and they were asked to take part in the survey. The researcher sent the link of the questionnaire on Google form to the students via Zalo group. All students answered 10 questions on the questionnaire. The researcher finally collected and analyzed the data related to the current situation of digital skills in online teaching of pedagogical students.

As the items in the questionnaire were administered, they were coded and run through SPSS to check the reliability of the items in the questionnaire.

III. Results

Results of the questionnaire

Reliability of the questionnaire

As the items in the questionnaire were administered, they were coded and run through SPSS to check the reliability of the items in the questionnaire. The most popular statistical index that is used to measure the internal consistency for the questionnaire items is the alpha value which was developed by Cronbach (1951). Cronbach's alpha value satisfying 0.7 shows acceptable reliability. If the Cronbach's alpha is below 0.7, the evidence proves that the items do not have much in common and are unable to measure the same construct. Table 3.1 presents the rules of alpha values suggested by George and Mallery (2003).

Table1. Rules of Alpha Values

Values	Levels
$\alpha \geq .90$	Excellent
$\alpha \geq .80$	Good
$\alpha \geq .70$	Acceptable
$\alpha \geq .60$	Questionable
$\alpha \geq .50$	Poor
$\alpha \leq .50$	Unacceptable

(George & Mallery, 2003)

Table 1 shows alpha value of the items in the questionnaire.

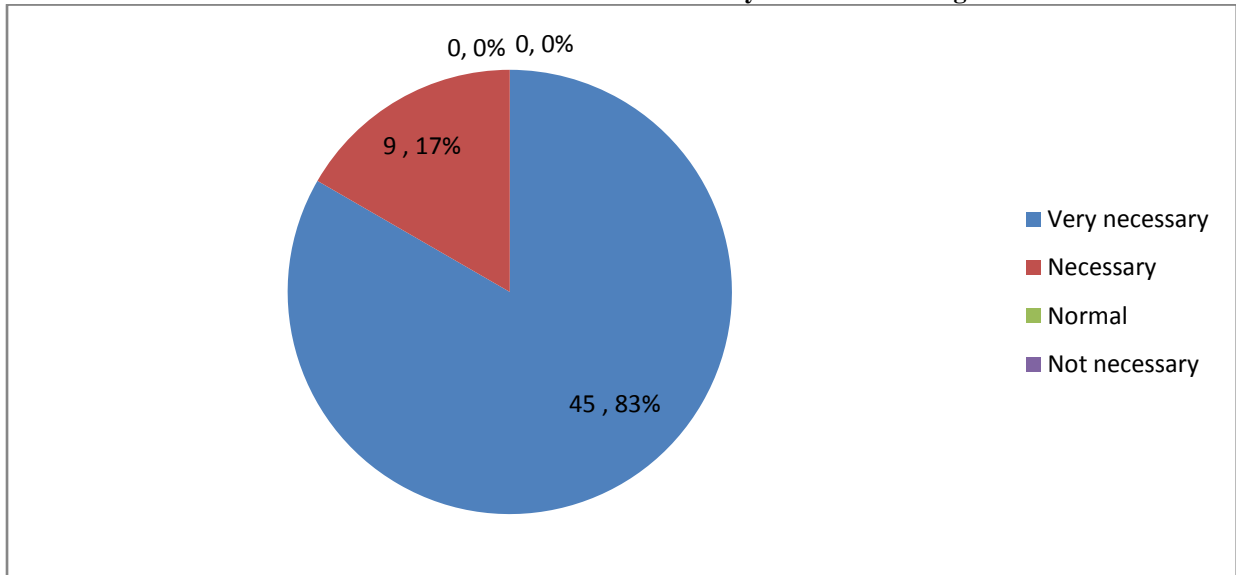
Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha values for the questionnaire

Number of item	Cronbach alpha	Level
10	0.756	Acceptable

Table 2 shows that the alpha value for all question items in the questionnaire is above 0.7 indicating the acceptable level of the questionnaire. Therefore, it can be inferred that the items for conducting the current situation of digital skills in online teaching of pedagogical students at TNUE are sufficiently reliable.

Students' attitudes towards the necessary of online teaching skills

Chart 1. Students' attitudes towards the necessary of online teaching skills



From the results in chart 1, the number of the students consider that online teaching skill is very necessary accounts for the highest proportion of 83% (45 out of 54 students) while the number of students who agree that this is a necessary ski is 9 students (equivalent to 17% participants). It can be concluded that all participants understand that online teaching skills is necessary for them in their work.

The reason why students know about online teaching software.

Chart 2. The reason why students know about online teaching software.

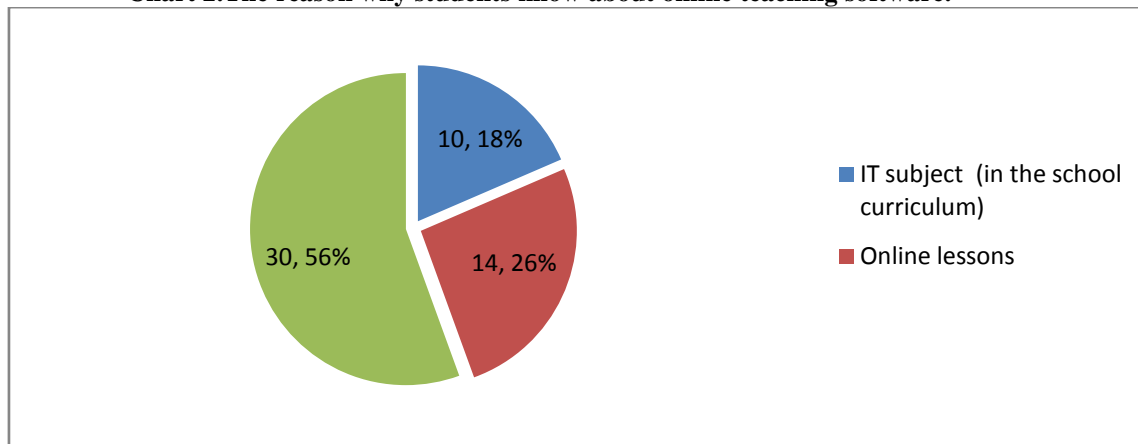


Chart 2 shows the survey results of the reason why students know about online teaching software. Only 10 students pointed out that they got this knowledge from IT subjects in their schools and 14 of them learn about online teaching software through their online lessons. More than half of the students (30 out of 54 students) taking 56% participants say that they study by themselves to get this knowledge.

The students' frequency of using online teaching tools

Table 3. The students' frequency of using online teaching tools

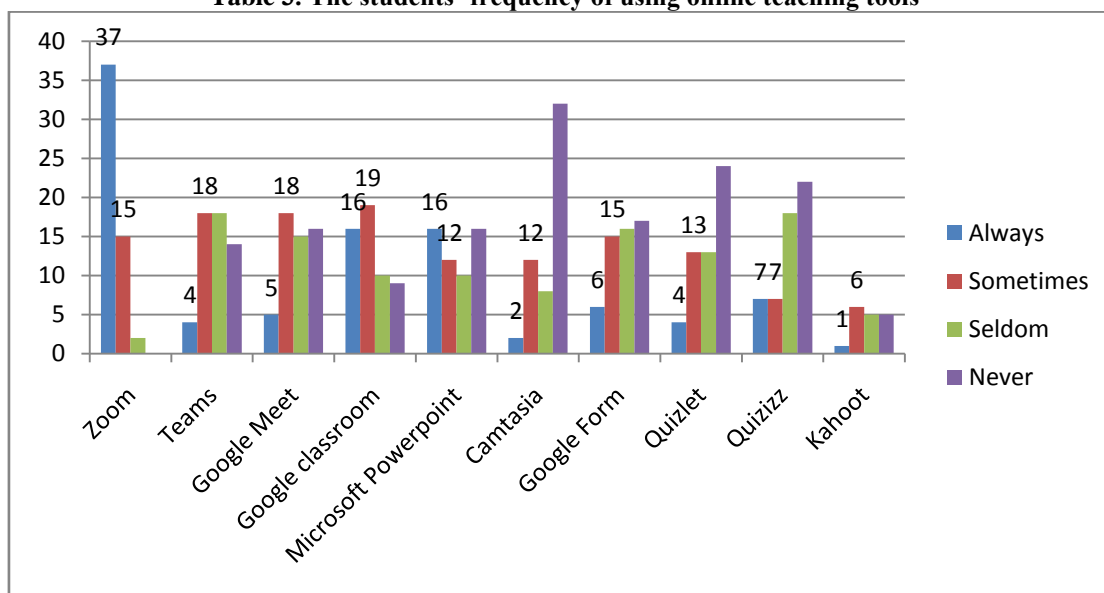
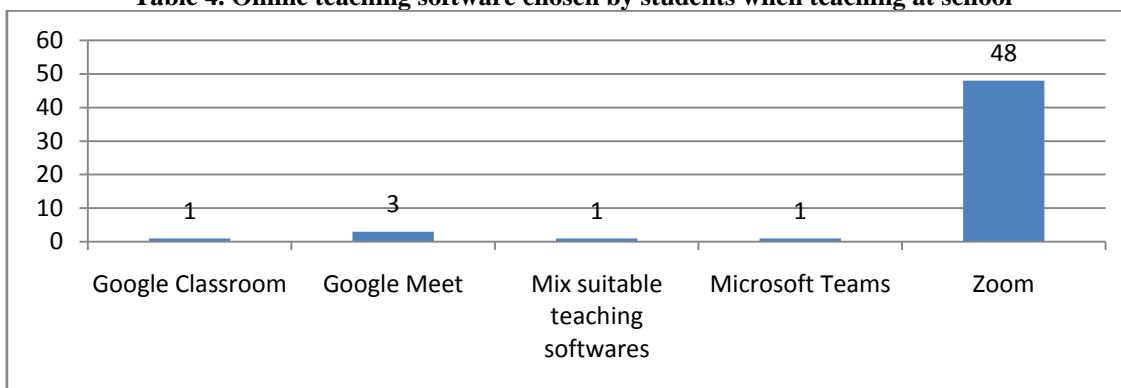


Table 3 indicates the students' frequency of using online teaching tools. Zoom, Microsoft Powerpoint and Google classroom are always used by the highest number of students accounted for 37 students, 16 students and 16 students respectively. Only 1 student always uses Kahoot, 2 students always use Camtasia and among 4 to 6 students always use other tools. Many participants answer that they never use such tools like Camtasia taking 32 participants, Quizlet and Quizizz taking more than 20 participants, Teams, Google meet, Microsoft powerpoint and Google form taking nearly 20 participants.

Online teaching software chosen by students when teaching at school

Table 4. Online teaching software chosen by students when teaching at school



It can be shown from Table 4 that almost all participants choose Zoom for their online teaching job at school after they graduate. Only from 1 to 3 out of 54 students choose other online teaching ways.

Students' understanding about the features of online teaching software

In response to the survey question "Do you understand all the features of this online teaching software? If yes, Can you list the features of the one you will use in the near future?" 35 students revealed that they understand a little bit and would love to have the opportunity to learn more about all online teaching software. There are 3 students claimed that it is easy to use Google Meet as teacher can interact to students without time limitation. Only one participant who choose Teams emphasizes that it is easy to create the account and to access; moreover the user-interface is quite friendly and users are not out often. The other 9 participants claim that they do not know anything about this.

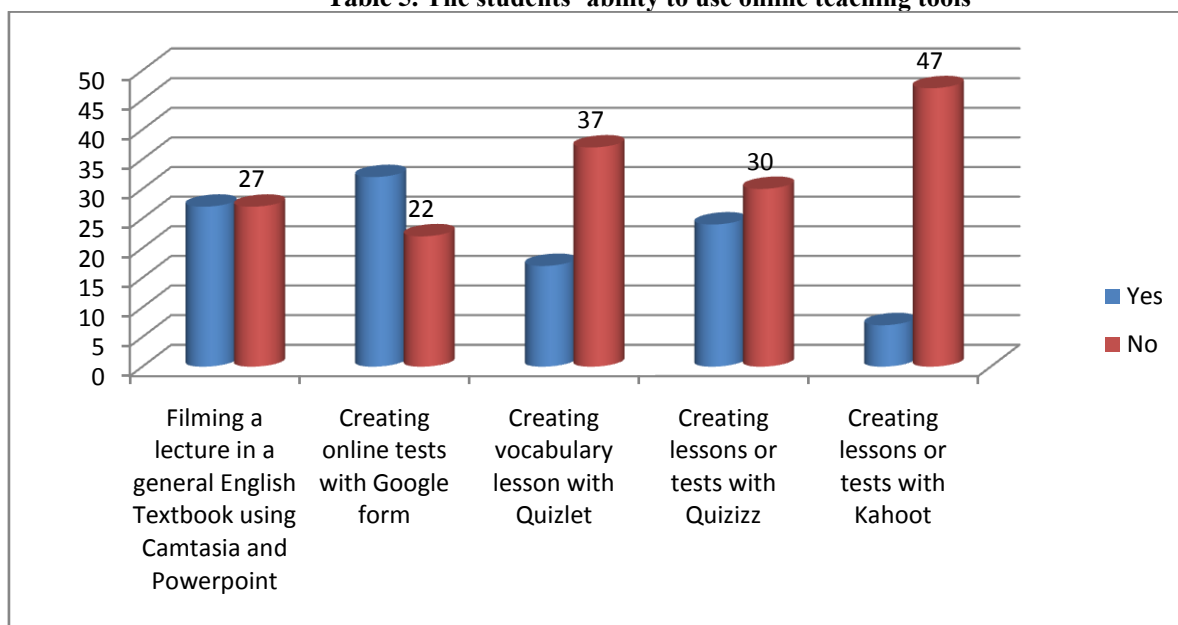
Students’ understanding about how to deeply integrate teaching software with online teaching tools

Regarding the survey question “Do you know how to deeply integrate teaching software with online teaching tools? Can you explain how you could integrate them to make the lesson more effective?” only two students reveals that they have been integrate Zoom with Powerpoint to increase the liveliness of the lesson and they can use Quizizz for students to practice as well as to do tests on online lessons. Almost all students (52 out of 54 participants) claim that they do not know about this.

Students’ digital skills in online teaching

Responding to the question “Can you use the following online teaching tools proficiently?”, Over 20 participants claim that they cannot film a lecture using Camtasia or create tests with Google form. In addition, more than 30 participants reveal that they do not know how to create lessons or tests with Quizlet and Quizizz. Nearly all participants (47 out of 54 students) say that they are not able to create lessons or tests with Kahoot.

Table 5. The students’ ability to use online teaching tools



IV. Discussion

Recognizing that the English majors at TNUE have struggled with using digital skills in online teaching and they emphasized that they really would like to have the opportunity to learn more about all online teaching software in order to improve their online teaching skills, the researcher has found it important to seek for feasible solutions to the improvement of the students’ digital skills in online teaching. After conducting the survey, based on the obtained results, the author found that the current situation of students’ digital skills in online teaching is still weak, most of them know a little about Zoom software through hours of studying online with teachers, a lot of supporting software and tools can be integrated in online teaching to make lessons more vivid and effective, which students hardly know.

Due to the limited time in class for IT subjects and the relatively new and abundant online teaching content, teachers cannot have enough time to convey all the necessary knowledge to help students understand deeply and clearly about how to use these online teaching aids and software proficiently. To be able to use proficiently and effectively the software and tools to support online teaching effectively, students need to know a reliable source of learning materials. Therefore, it would be reasonable for the researcher to suggest the implementation of teacher-designed website guiding students to use necessary online teaching software and tools. This website is a meaningful tool to enhance students’ digital skills in online teaching not only in Thai Nguyen University of Education but also in other educational institutions with similar contexts.

V. Conclusion

Based on the survey results, most of students see the need to equip themselves with digital skills in online teaching, thereby they will actively and voluntarily explore, discover and self-study to develop digital skills in online teaching for themselves. When being oriented and provided with clear and scientific learning resources for self-study, students will have the opportunity to actively access useful learning resources to serve essential needs for their online teaching work after graduation. The provision of clear and scientific learning

materials greatly affects the learning efficiency of students, help to form initiative, positivity and creativity in their learning. This is another reason why the researcher proposes the building of a website to support and guide students to self-study and learn in order to improve pedagogical students' digital skills in online teaching.

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