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Research on the Current Predicament and Implementation Strategies for Cultivating Digital Literacy Among Rural Kindergarten Teachers

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Abstract: ***The digitalization of education is an important breakthrough for China to open up new tracks for educational development and shape new advantages in it. Rural kindergarten teachers are the primary resource for the digital transformation of education. Enhancing the digital literacy of rural kindergarten teachers is a strategic requirement for building a high-quality education system. In order to make the digital literacy of rural kindergarten teachers better meet the development needs of the digital transformation of education, it is necessary to face up to the problems such as the insufficient motivation for the self-improvement of digital literacy of rural kindergarten teachers, the lack of effective and complete digital teaching assessment systems in rural kindergartens, and the imperfect digital literacy training system for rural kindergarten teachers. Therefore, Countermeasures such as transforming teachers' cognitive concepts of digital teaching, improving the evaluation mechanism of digital literacy for rural teachers, and perfecting the training system of digital literacy for rural kindergarten teachers can be adopted to promote the informatization reform of rural education.***

Keywords: Rural, Digital Literacy, Professional Development, Implementation Strategies, Kindergarten Teacher**.**

1. Connotation of Digital Literacy Among Rural Kindergarten Teachers

1.1 Research Subjects

The definition of digital literacy provided in the European Union's working document in 2008 is "the skills required to achieve digital competence. It is based on basic information and communication technology skills, as well as the ability to use computers to retrieve, evaluate, store, produce, present, and communicate information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks through the Internet" [1]. In the "Digital Literacy Task Force Report" published by the American Library Association in 2013, "digital literacy" was defined as: "the ability to use information and communication technologies to retrieve, understand, evaluate, create, and communicate digital information, and this ability should include cognitive and technical skills" [2]. The Cyberspace Administration of China defines digital literacy from a holistic perspective as a collection of qualities and abilities, defining digital literacy and skills as a collection of qualities and abilities that citizens of a digital society should possess in learning, work, and life, including digital acquisition, production, use, evaluation, interaction, sharing, innovation, security, ethics, and other basic elements. Specifically, it includes digital awareness, computational thinking, digital learning and innovation, and digital social responsibility. Digital literacy, also known as digital competence or digital capability, is considered one of the key skills that must be mastered in the 21st century, and the European Union has explicitly listed it as one of the eight core competencies for lifelong learning. Some academic views point out that while digital literacy and digital competence may differ in expression, both are considered essential skills in the information age. In view of this, this paper adopts a unified conceptual perspective, treating "digital literacy" and "digital competence" as synonyms, aiming to explore their common connotations and practical applications in the context of digital transformation. Within the scope of this study, the researchers define digital literacy as: the comprehensive embodiment of an individual's ability to efficiently use digital tools and technologies to collect, analyze, integrate, create, and disseminate information in a digital environment.

1.2 Teacher Digital Literacy

The European Union is a pioneer in the research of teacher digital literacy, mainly explaining the basic connotation of teacher digital literacy from six aspects: professional engagement, digital resources, teaching and learning, evaluation, empowering learners, and improving learners' digital literacy [3]. Norway, in its "Framework for Teacher Professional Digital Literacy," clearly states that teacher digital literacy is a key element in cultivating students' digital competence in the digital age, and divides teacher digital literacy into three aspects: digital knowledge, digital skills, and digital teaching ability [4]. The definition of teacher literacy in this study refers to the definition in the "Teacher Digital Literacy" industry standard promulgated by the Ministry of Education: "Teachers appropriately use digital technology to acquire, process, use, manage, and evaluate digital information and resources, discover, analyze, and solve educational and teaching problems, and optimize, innovate, and transform educational and teaching activities, possessing the awareness, ability, and responsibility." [5].

1.3 Research Subjects

Kindergarten teacher digital literacy is the specific manifestation of teacher digital literacy in the early childhood education stage. Scholars such as Liu Guoyan define kindergarten teacher digital literacy as: kindergarten teachers, based on mastering the characteristics of children's physical and mental development, appropriately use digital technology

to acquire, process, use, manage, and evaluate digital information and resources, discover, analyze, and solve educational and teaching problems, and optimize, innovate, and transform educational and teaching activities, thereby improving the awareness, ability, and responsibility for the quality of kindergarten care and education [6]. Scholar Tong Feng, referring to the "Teacher Teacher Literacy" standard issued by the Ministry of Education, proposes that kindergarten teacher literacy refers to the full-time personnel engaged in the education and care of children aged 3-6, who can effectively use digital technology to acquire, process, apply, manage, and evaluate digital information and resources, possess the ability to discover, analyze, and solve educational and teaching problems, and have the awareness, ability, and responsibility to optimize, innovate, and transform educational and teaching activities. At the same time, he divides kindergarten teacher digital literacy into five dimensions: digital awareness, digital technology knowledge, digital technology skills, digital application, and digital social responsibility, and formed the composition of kindergarten teacher digital literacy (see table below) [7]. This study adopts and extends scholar Tong Feng's views on the definition of kindergarten teacher digital literacy.

Table 1: Composition of Kindergarten Teacher Digital Literacy

Dimension	Indicator	Specific Description
Digital Awareness	Digital Understanding	Recognize the value of digital technology in kindergarten teaching activities and collaborative education; recognize the opportunities and challenges brought by digital technology development to early childhood education; recognize the important role of digital technology in personal professional development.
	Digital Willingness	Have the willingness to use digital technology resources in kindergarten education and teaching activities; have the initiative to integrate digital technology with kindergarten education and teaching activities.
	Digital Will	Have the confidence and determination to overcome difficulties and challenges in the practice of digital education in kindergartens, such as the use of digital technology resources and the innovation of teaching methods, and firmly believe in and continuously explore digital education and teaching practices.
Digital Knowledge	Basic Digital Technology Knowledge	Understand the connotations and characteristics of common digital technologies; understand the cutting-edge developments of digital technologies; understand the procedures and methods for digital technologies to solve problems.
	Digital Technology Integration Knowledge	Master the channels for acquiring kindergarten teaching resources; master the knowledge and methods of integrating digital technology into game activities.
Digital Skills	Basic Digital Technology Skills	Be able to skillfully operate and use digital equipment, software, and platforms; be able to use digital technology to retrieve and acquire information resources; be able to solve basic digital technology problems.
	Digital Technology Integration Ability	Be able to create and process digital teaching resources according to children's learning and development needs; be able to select appropriate digital teaching equipment and teaching resources to carry out activities according to activity goals and children's characteristics.
Digital Application	Digital Teaching	Be able to use digital technology resources to create a blended learning environment; be able to appropriately integrate digital technology into kindergarten teaching activities to enhance children's participation and initiative; be able to use digital tools to collect children's feedback and optimize teaching activities.
	Digital Evaluation	Be able to use digital technology to record children's performance and growth; be able to select and apply appropriate data analysis models to analyze children's growth data; be able to visualize and present children's growth data analysis results with the help of digital tools and provide reasonable explanations.
	Digital Collaborative Education	Be able to guide parents to appropriately select and use digital technology resources to support children's learning; be able to use digital technology resources to broaden moral education channels; be able to use digital technology resources to assist in various forms of mental health education activities; be able to use digital technology resources to achieve communication and exchange between kindergartens and families.
	Digital Professional Development	Be able to learn using digital technology resources according to personal development needs; be able to use digital technology resources to analyze personal teaching practices; participate in or host online research communities to learn, share experiences, seek help, and solve problems together; be able to use digital technology resources to support teaching research activities.
Digital Responsibility	Legal and Ethical Norms	Abide by internet laws and regulations, consciously regulate online behavior; respect intellectual property rights, pay attention to children's physical and mental health; abide by network communication order, and spread positive energy through the network.
	Digital Security Protection	Pay attention to data security maintenance when collecting, storing, using, and disseminating data of children, parents, and others in work; identify, prevent, and deal with online risk behaviors.

2. Current Predicament in Cultivating Digital Literacy Among Rural Kindergarten Teachers

2.1 Insufficient Self-Improvement Motivation for Digital Literacy Among Rural Kindergarten Teachers

As the digitalization process of education continues to advance, teachers should actively use digital means to improve their digital professional level to meet the needs of educational development. Research on the problems existing in the digital literacy of rural kindergarten teachers found that most teachers have insufficient motivation for self-improvement in digital literacy, which seriously restricts their enthusiasm for digital teaching. The insufficient motivation for self-improvement in teachers' digital literacy is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

2.1.1 Teachers have low learning interest and have not yet developed learning habits

As the saying goes: "Those who know are not as good as those who like it, and those who like it are not as good as those who enjoy it." Interest is the best teacher, and it is the internal driving force that stimulates the desire for knowledge and curiosity, which can support learners to continuously study and improve. Interviews found that many teachers are exhausted by daily routine work during the day and have to take care of their families and children at night, lacking time and energy. They do not have many opportunities to use digital technology knowledge and skills, have low learning interest, and have not formed good habits of continuous learning. They lack attention to the development of cutting-edge technologies, and thus have relatively little knowledge and skills.

2.1.2 Teachers have an unclear understanding of the relationship between improving digital literacy and their professional development.

Most teachers simply regard teaching as a job and using digital technology as a task, without realizing that the cultivation of digital literacy is a process of improving their professionalism, perfecting their professional structure, and enhancing their professional level. According to interviews, the improvement of teachers' digital literacy currently mainly comes from the relevant requirements of schools. Teachers lack the internal pursuit of digital literacy development, believing that improving digital literacy is a task assigned by the school, and they are simply learning mechanically to meet the school's requirements. This idea leads to a lack of self-improvement motivation among teachers, who only learn to complete tasks, making it difficult to comprehensively and effectively improve their digital capabilities.

2.1.3 Teachers lack digital literacy development planning.

Clear goals can motivate teachers to continuously improve their digital capabilities and professional literacy, helping them clarify their career direction and development path. However, some teachers have not formulated digital literacy development plans, which leads to difficulties in implementing teachers' digital literacy improvement work on schedule, and the digital knowledge and skills learned are not systematic, making it difficult to effectively apply them in teaching practice. Teachers without clear goals find it difficult to effectively measure their digital literacy level and lack the motivation to improve. Therefore, only by formulating detailed plans and learning purposefully according to digital teaching needs can teachers achieve practical application and effectively improve their digital capabilities.

2.2 Rural Kindergartens Lack Effective and Complete Digital Teaching Assessment Systems

The application of digital technology in education and teaching is not easy and requires teachers to put in a lot of effort. Only by stimulating teachers' internal drive can their enthusiasm for using digital technology be maintained. At present, most rural kindergartens do not have mandatory requirements for digital teaching and lack relevant evaluation mechanisms and reward measures, which is not conducive to the advancement of digital education in schools. The incomplete digital teaching assessment system in rural kindergartens is mainly manifested as follows:

2.2.1 Lack of a sound evaluation mechanism.

At present, most rural kindergartens have not established a sound digital teaching evaluation mechanism, and digital teaching is not included in the assessment results, leading to teachers' lack of attention to digital teaching. Since most schools do not mandate teachers to conduct digital teaching, nor do they deploy relevant supervision and inspection work, teachers mainly use traditional teaching methods and lack the initiative to conduct digital teaching. Therefore, teachers only carefully prepare digital courses during open classes, and usually digital teaching is merely a formality, making it difficult to guarantee the quality of the classroom.

2.2.2 Lack of comprehensive assessment methods.

Digital teaching ability is a multi-dimensional comprehensive ability that requires teachers to integrate digital theoretical knowledge with digital teaching practice. At present, digital teaching assessment methods are not sound, mostly assessing only one aspect, such as digital knowledge or digital tool operation skills. The assessment methods are also mainly based on written tests or computer operations, and the evaluation methods are too simple. This leads to teachers only focusing on learning the assessed content, neglecting the organic integration of digital knowledge and teaching practice, making it difficult to comprehensively improve their digital literacy.

2.2.3 Lack of effective incentive mechanisms.

At present, most rural kindergartens have carried out digital teaching work to varying degrees, but have not formulated specific reward measures, making it difficult to truly ensure the effective implementation of teachers' digital teaching work. On the one hand, most kindergartens do not have high requirements for teachers' digital technology application capabilities, only requiring them to be able to edit short videos and create multimedia courseware. This ability is not included in the teacher assessment and evaluation system, and there are no assessment requirements for conducting digital teaching activities, digital evaluation of young children, and online home-school communication. Teachers who perform well in digital technology application practice are not given timely spiritual or material incentives. Therefore, whether teachers apply digital technology or not has no impact on their performance appraisal and growth and development, leading to insufficient motivation for technology application.

2.3 Imperfect Training System for Digital Literacy Among Rural Kindergarten Teachers

Training is an effective way to improve the digital literacy of rural kindergarten teachers. Currently, the digital literacy training for rural kindergarten teachers mainly has the following problems: lack of targeted training content, single training format, and lack of follow-up guidance.

2.3.1 Lack of targeted training content

Lack of targeted training content is specifically manifested in two aspects: First, the training content lacks adaptive guidance for classroom teaching practice. The current digital literacy training content for rural kindergarten teachers mainly focuses on digital theoretical knowledge and digital operation skills. The training on the integration of digital technology with classroom teaching practice is not deep enough and cannot meet the requirements of rural digital development. In practice, teachers cannot effectively combine the digital knowledge and skills they have learned with teaching content, leading to weak digital technology and subject integration capabilities among rural teachers, and difficulties in carrying out digital teaching.

Second, the training content lacks personalized guidance and does not consider the actual needs of teachers at various levels. At present, the training designed for rural teachers is basically

the same in content, lacking targeted guidance for teachers at different levels. The training content is mainly set based on the average level of teachers' digital literacy. For teachers with higher digital literacy, the training content is too simple, and the effect of improving their digital capabilities is not obvious, thereby reducing their initiative to participate in training. For teachers with lower digital literacy, the training content is too complex and difficult to master in a short period, affecting their enthusiasm to participate in training.

2.3.2 Single training format.

Most existing training formats adopt short-term intensive training, where experts and scholars explain theoretical knowledge related to digital technology and teach digital tool usage skills through lectures and seminars. There is less communication between experts and teachers during the training, and training experts explain the prepared training content verbatim, lacking an understanding of teachers' training needs. Teachers are busy taking notes, taking photos, etc., eager to keep up with the training progress, lacking reflection and understanding of the training content, and finding it difficult to connect what they have learned with actual teaching. This training format is not very effective, and teachers cannot effectively transform the training content into their own teaching knowledge and skills, reducing their enthusiasm to participate in training.

2.3.3 Lack of follow-up guidance for training.

The development of teachers' digital literacy is a continuous and spiraling process, and relevant training for teachers' digital literacy should also be a long-term undertaking. However, the training currently carried out in rural kindergartens is all phased, short-term intensive training. This training model imparts a lot of digital knowledge to teachers in a short period, and the training process is too tightly arranged, and the training content is complex, making it difficult for teachers to fully digest and absorb all the learned content during the training period, and they may have questions about some of the training content. Due to the lack of follow-up guidance, teachers find it difficult to solve these problems on their own. Teachers can understand the training content during the training, but they will also encounter some problems when applying these contents to teaching practice, which requires professional guidance. However, in fact, most schools lack follow-up guidance for training content, and what teachers learn is difficult to play a role in practical teaching, and the actual effect of the training is minimal.

3. Rural Kindergarten Teachers' Digital Literacy Realization Path

3.1 Transform Teachers' Digital Teaching Concepts

The rapid development of the times and the deep integration of digital technology with education and teaching have become an inevitable trend for the deepening of current educational reforms. Educational informatization theory holds that teachers should possess informatized teaching design thinking, update their teaching concepts, break traditional teaching models, and actively apply modern information technology to educational and teaching activities such as classroom management, knowledge instruction, quality cultivation, and academic evaluation, thereby promoting the reform and development of education and teaching. As teachers in the new era, they should actively learn and accumulate, boldly explore and practice, fully understand the advantages of digital technology, clarify the value of digital technology, and correctly recognize that digital technology brings not only the updating of methods and means, but also the updating of thinking patterns; the integration of technology is for "optimization and innovation," not "complete replacement"; digital teaching is not just the assistance of advanced technology, but also the innovation of teaching design concepts; and the purpose of conducting digital teaching is not only to stimulate children's learning interest, but more importantly to cultivate children's innovative thinking and innovative abilities..

3.2 Improve the Evaluation Mechanism for Rural Teachers' Digital Literacy

The improvement of digital literacy among rural kindergarten teachers is a long and arduous task that requires continuous efforts. In this process, kindergartens need to build a sound evaluation mechanism to provide continuous support and assistance. Therefore, rural kindergartens should improve the evaluation mechanism for teachers' digital literacy to play a supervisory and incentive role, thereby mobilizing the enthusiasm of kindergarten teachers in cultivating digital literacy. Specifically, this should be implemented from the following two aspects:

3.2.1 Improve the Teacher Digital Literacy Assessment System.

A sound teacher digital literacy assessment system can not only test teachers' digital literacy levels but also play a supervisory and incentive role. Comprehensive assessment is an indispensable link in the cultivation of digital literacy among rural kindergarten teachers. However, at present, most rural kindergartens' assessments of teachers' professional levels do not involve content related to teachers' digital literacy. Therefore, rural kindergartens can refer to the "Teacher Digital Literacy Industry Standard" issued by the Ministry of Education, and make targeted modifications based on the actual situation of kindergartens and the development characteristics of kindergarten teachers' digital literacy. First, digital application ability should be included in the core indicators of teacher professional development, and a dual-track assessment mechanism combining process evaluation and summative evaluation should be implemented. For example, organize teachers to carry out special research projects on "digitalization of local educational resources" and form a regional resource library through teaching case competitions. The assessment dimensions should cover the innovation of technology application, teaching effectiveness, and the value of promoting results, and establish electronic professional development files for teachers to track their growth trajectories. Second, determine the evaluation methods for rural kindergarten teachers' digital literacy. Based on the actual teaching practice of teachers, formulate detailed assessment indicators for kindergarten teachers' digital teaching skills. The indicators should have clear guidance and operability, and adopt various forms such as

classroom observation and teaching observation to record teachers' use of digital technology in teaching activities and children's evaluation. Establish digital education and teaching ability growth files for each teacher, and conduct assessments once a semester or year based on the assessment indicators, and include the assessment results in teachers' mid-term or year-end evaluations, and use them as one of the bases for selecting outstanding teachers and professional title evaluations.

3.2.2 Establish and Improve Effective Incentive Mechanisms.

Promoting the improvement of digital literacy among ru ral kindergarten teachers requires not only a sound external assessment system but also strengthened incentive mechanisms to stimulate internal motivation. Therefore, building effective incentive mechanisms plays an important role in improving teachers' digital literacy.

Rural kindergartens can adopt a combination of material and spiritual incentives to mobilize teachers' enthusiasm for cultivating digital literacy. On the one hand, schools should, according to actual conditions, provide material rewards to teachers who actively participate in digital activities and have good assessment results, fully mobilizing teachers' enthusiasm for improving digital literacy. School organizers should actively count teachers participating in digital teaching and research, digital skill competitions, and other activities, and use the school's digital cloud platform to collect excellent teaching courseware and digital teaching courses produced by teachers. At the end of the semester, the school should give material rewards to outstanding teachers who perform well. On the other hand, schools should also pay attention to spiritual incentives for teachers. School organizers can set up relevant honorary titles, establish digital teaching benchmarks, and organize outstanding representatives to give lectures to enhance the enthusiasm of rural kindergarten teachers to participate in digital teaching-related activities. In addition, collective honors can be set up to encourage all rural kindergarten teachers to actively participate in digital teaching, create an atmosphere for digital literacy cultivation, and form a good incentive mechanism.

3.3 Improve the Training System for Digital Literacy Among Rural Kindergarten Teachers

The digital transformation and upgrading of education has become an inevitable trend. Digital literacy, as an essential professional literacy for teachers, requires teachers to master systematic knowledge and skills, and teachers cannot fully grasp relevant knowledge through self-exploration. Therefore, efforts should be intensified to provide digital training for rural kindergarten teachers to improve their digital literacy.

3.3.1 Provide Targeted Digital Teaching Training Content.

When conducting digital literacy training for rural kindergarten teachers, it is important to first understand their training needs. For example, first, a survey questionnaire can be used to conduct preliminary research, and the collected data can be summarized and used as a basis for setting training content. Adopting a preliminary research approach helps to understand the actual needs of rural kindergarten teachers for digital literacy, ensuring that the training content is targeted. At the same time, understanding the educational background, age, and educational concepts of the participating teachers helps to formulate specific training plans. Determining digital literacy training content in this way helps to improve training effectiveness and increase teachers' enthusiasm for participating in training. Second, carry out differentiated training. Differentiated training refers to setting training content and selecting training formats specifically for different teacher groups based on their digital literacy levels, in order to maximize the effectiveness of the training. Differentiated training requires evaluating teachers' digital literacy levels before training, dividing them into basic, intermediate, and advanced groups, and setting different training content for each group. This approach can not only meet the training needs of different teacher groups but also effectively improve teachers' digital literacy.

3.3.2 Enrich Digital Teaching Training Models.

When conducting training, a combination of online and offline training models can be adopted: online training is mainly planned by training experts, including training content, teaching methods, interaction modes, and assessment requirements; offline training involves school administrators selecting teachers with higher digital literacy to form an assistant team, organizing participating teachers to interact with experts through Q&A sessions, and mobilizing teachers' enthusiasm. At the same time, during the teaching training process, the training group should assign homework on-site and conduct real-time assessments to timely understand the participating teachers' grasp of the training content, so as to adjust the training content as needed, implement needs-based and precise teaching, improve teachers' concentration in training, and enhance training effectiveness.

In addition, various training methods should be explored to increase the interest of participating teachers. Schools can adopt research-based and interactive training, where teachers play a leading role in the training process, studying digital teaching problems in groups and brainstorming to learn together. Experiential training can also be adopted, using scenario simulation to stimulate learners' interest. For example, simulating teacher teaching scenarios, focusing on which segment of the lecture to embed digital technology to maximize the advantages of digital teaching. Simulating real teaching scenarios allows teachers to experience how to use theoretical knowledge to guide teaching practice.

3.3.3 Carry out Follow-up Guidance for Training.

The training of digital literacy among rural kindergarten teachers is not a fragmented process, but a continuous and systematic one. To ensure the effectiveness of the training, follow-up guidance on the training content should be strengthened to ensure that teachers fully understand and master the training content. First, establish a training effectiveness evaluation system. Strengthen daily supervision of participating teachers, for example, by taking attendance offline and checking in online to ensure teachers participate in training activities on time. After each training session, conduct assessments of the taught training content through Q&A or written tests to understand teachers' grasp of the training content. Second, provide follow-up guidance for

problems encountered by teachers during training. The training group understands the problems encountered by teachers during training through assessments and provides personalized guidance based on these problems to targetedly improve teachers' digital capabilities. In addition, regular follow-up guidance should be carried out to help teachers solve problems encountered in teaching practice and continuously improve teachers' digital literacy.

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