Building Future-Ready Students through English Language and Digital Skills: A Capacity-Building Perspective

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The rapid development of higher education and the workplace in the digital age have raised the requirement for graduates with not just disciplinary knowledge but also excellent communication, technical, and transferable skills. In this setting, English language skills and digital literacy have become crucial components of student capacity building. English functions as a crucial vehicle for scholarly discourse, professional engagement, knowledge attainment, and worldwide connectedness, whereas digital competencies empower students to retrieve information, communicate proficiently, cooperate online, produce digital material, and adjust to new technologies. This research analyses the impact of combining English language education with digital skills in building future-ready students in higher education, with special focus to students from diverse and possibly disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

The study employs a capacity-building perspective to evaluate how language and digital capabilities might contribute to students' academic growth, employability, confidence, critical thinking, communication abilities, and lifelong learning. It focuses on the ways in which technology-supported English language learning—including digital learning platforms, online resources, multimedia content, collaborative tools, artificial intelligence-assisted learning, and digital communication—can create learner-centred and skill-oriented educational environments. The research also analyses the problems students may confront, including uneven access to digital resources, inequalities in technological ability, language anxiety, restricted possibilities for real English conversation, and the digital divide.

A qualitative and descriptive method may be applied through a review of relevant literature, educational practices, and classroom experiences to find successful techniques for combining English language learning with digital competency development. The research argues that capacity development should go beyond conventional language training towards an integrated paradigm that improves communication, digital literacy, critical thinking, creativity, cooperation, problem-solving, and self-directed learning. The study contends that

future-ready education requires students to become confident users of both language and technology. Integrating English and digital skills can give learners with increased chances for academic involvement, professional communication, employment, and interaction with global knowledge networks. The study indicates that higher education institutions may play a vital role in preparing students for changing academic and professional situations by building inclusive, technology-enabled, and skill-oriented learning spaces. Such an approach can contribute to a more comprehensive model of student development in which English proficiency and digital competence act together as crucial features of modern capacity building.
Keywords: English Language Skills, Digital Literacy, Future-Ready Students, Capacity Building, Higher Education, Employability, Digital Education, Communication Skills

Introduction

Higher education is experiencing a substantial transformation as a result of technological advancement, globalization, artificial intelligence, changing patterns of employment, and the expansion of digital communication. The contemporary college graduate is expected to possess more than disciplinary knowledge. Academic qualifications continue to be important, but they increasingly need to be accompanied by communication competence, technological literacy, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, adaptability, problem-solving, and the capacity for lifelong learning. The changing requirements of the world of work make this development particularly significant. The *Future of Jobs Report 2025* identifies analytical thinking, resilience, flexibility and agility, leadership and social influence, and creative thinking among important core skills, while technological literacy, artificial intelligence and big data, and networks and cybersecurity are among the fastest-growing areas of skill demand. The report further observes that a substantial proportion of workers' existing skills is expected to change by 2030, emphasizing the need for continuous upskilling and reskilling (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2025).

This changing environment has important implications for higher education. Institutions can no longer regard education merely as the transmission of established knowledge. They must also create conditions in which students learn how to acquire, interpret, evaluate, communicate, and apply knowledge in changing circumstances. The notion of the "future-ready student" therefore refers not simply to a technologically competent learner but to

a learner who can adapt to changing contexts and use knowledge, language, technology, and human capacities effectively.

Within this broader educational transformation, English language proficiency occupies an important position. English continues to be widely used in higher education, research communication, professional environments, academic publishing, digital communication, and international knowledge exchange. For many students, proficiency in English affects their ability to access academic resources, participate in classroom discussions, prepare assignments, deliver presentations, communicate professionally, and engage with wider intellectual communities. However, English proficiency should not be reduced to grammatical accuracy. Contemporary communication requires students to understand audiences, contexts, genres, media, and purposes.

At the same time, digital technology has changed the nature of literacy itself. Students increasingly encounter knowledge through websites, electronic books, online journals, social-media platforms, learning-management systems, videos, podcasts, interactive applications, artificial intelligence tools, and multimedia environments. Consequently, digital literacy involves much more than the ability to operate a computer or smartphone. It includes the capacity to search for information, assess its credibility, communicate appropriately, collaborate online, create digital content, protect personal information, understand ethical responsibilities, and solve problems through technology.

The connection between English and digital skills is therefore becoming increasingly significant. A student preparing an online presentation in English requires linguistic competence as well as digital competence. A student writing a research paper using electronic sources requires reading, writing, information-search, source-evaluation, and citation skills. A student participating in an online discussion requires communication competence, digital etiquette, and technological familiarity. Similarly, a student using artificial intelligence to support language learning needs not only the ability to formulate prompts but also the critical ability to evaluate the accuracy, relevance, bias, and originality of the resulting information.

The relationship between language and technology can also be understood through the concept of multiliteracies. The New London Group (1996) argued that literacy education must respond to linguistic and cultural diversity and to the changing forms through which meaning is communicated. In contemporary digital environments, meaning is produced not only through conventional written language but also through images, video, audio, hyperlinks, visual design,

and interactive media. English education, therefore, has the potential to become a significant space for developing broader communicative and digital capacities.

The Indian context makes this discussion particularly relevant. The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes holistic development, skill development, technology-enabled education, blended learning, digital infrastructure, digital content, teacher capacity building, and employability. It explicitly recognizes that digital education must be developed with appropriate pedagogical standards and that technology should complement rather than eliminate face-to-face educational interaction. The policy also identifies the importance of higher-education institutions in developing courses and training related to emerging technologies and job readiness.

The present article therefore examines the integration of English language and digital skills from a capacity-building perspective. Rather than treating these as two independent areas, it proposes that they should be understood as mutually reinforcing competencies that can contribute to students' academic participation, employability, confidence, creativity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

The central argument of this article is that future-ready education requires an integrated approach in which English language competence, digital competence, critical thinking, creativity, employability, and ethical awareness are developed together. Such an approach is particularly relevant to higher-education institutions serving students with diverse educational, linguistic, social, and technological backgrounds.

Research Objectives and Methodology

The primary objective of this article is to examine the role of English language and digital skills in preparing students for contemporary academic, professional, and social environments. More specifically, the article seeks to examine the significance of English communication in higher education; explore the changing meaning of digital literacy; investigate the relationship between language and digital competence; examine the role of technology-supported English learning; discuss employability and lifelong learning; identify challenges associated with the digital divide and unequal linguistic and technological opportunities; and propose an integrated capacity-building approach for higher education.

The article follows a qualitative conceptual research methodology based on a review and synthesis of scholarly literature, educational theories, policy documents, and contemporary

reports. It does not claim to provide primary quantitative evidence or statistical measurement of student outcomes. Instead, it develops an analytical argument by bringing together scholarship on communicative competence, digital literacy, multiliteracies, educational technology, employability, and artificial intelligence.

The discussion draws on foundational work in communicative language teaching and digital literacy, including Canale and Swain (1980), Bawden (2008), and the New London Group (1996). It also considers the implications of contemporary educational policy and international frameworks. UNESCO's digital-competence resources emphasize areas such as information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, and problem-solving, demonstrating that digital competence extends well beyond basic device operation. UNESCO's more recent AI competency framework identifies a human-centred mindset, ethics of AI, AI techniques and applications, and AI system design as major dimensions of student AI competence, with progression from understanding to application and creation (Miao et al., 2024). The methodological purpose is therefore interpretive rather than statistical. The article uses the literature to develop a coherent conceptual framework for integrating English language and digital skills in higher education. The proposed framework may subsequently be tested through empirical research involving student questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, digital-skills assessments, or mixed-method studies.

English Language, Digital Literacy, and the Development of Future-Ready Students

The development of future-ready students begins with a reconsideration of what constitutes educational competence. Conventional models of higher education have frequently emphasized subject knowledge and examination performance. While disciplinary knowledge remains fundamental, the changing educational and professional environment requires students to demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge in unfamiliar situations. Capacity building provides an appropriate framework for this transition because it emphasizes not merely what students know but what they are able to do with their knowledge.

Capacity building in education can be understood as the development of knowledge, skills, confidence, agency, resources, and opportunities that enable learners to participate effectively in academic, professional, and social environments. From this perspective, English language competence represents communicative capacity, while digital literacy represents technological and information-processing capacity. When combined with critical thinking,

creativity, collaboration, adaptability, and ethical awareness, these capacities can contribute to holistic student development.

English language education is particularly significant because communication is central to almost every area of higher education. Students need English to read scholarly literature, participate in seminars, prepare assignments, deliver presentations, communicate with teachers and peers, attend interviews, write professional correspondence, and engage with research communities. Communicative competence therefore extends beyond grammatical knowledge. Canale and Swain (1980) conceptualized communicative competence as involving grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic dimensions. This understanding remains useful because effective communication requires learners to know not only what is grammatically possible but also what is appropriate in a particular context.

In contemporary higher education, the context of communication has expanded significantly. Students no longer communicate exclusively through classroom conversation or printed assignments. They communicate through email, learning-management systems, virtual meetings, collaborative documents, discussion forums, professional networking platforms, podcasts, presentations, and multimedia content. Consequently, language education needs to address different forms of digital communication.

The concept of multiliteracies provides an important theoretical foundation for this shift. The New London Group (1996) argued that literacy pedagogy should recognize the diversity of linguistic and cultural practices and the emergence of new communication technologies. Their approach is especially relevant to contemporary higher education because students increasingly encounter multimodal texts. A digital presentation, for instance, may combine written language, images, audio, animation, charts, and video. Effective communication therefore requires students to make decisions about language, design, medium, audience, and purpose.

Digital literacy consequently needs to be understood as an extension of literacy rather than as a completely separate technical ability. Bawden (2008) emphasizes that digital literacy encompasses the ability to understand and use information in multiple digital forms. In higher education, this involves locating information, evaluating sources, interpreting digital content, communicating through technological platforms, and producing new digital materials.

Information evaluation is particularly important because digital environments provide students with unprecedented quantities of information. Access does not necessarily mean

understanding. Students may encounter misinformation, misleading headlines, manipulated images, unreliable websites, artificial intelligence-generated material, commercial content, and sources of uncertain authority. Digital competence must therefore include critical evaluation.

A future-ready student should be able to ask who produced a particular source, what evidence supports its claims, when it was published, what purpose it serves, whether the information can be verified, and whether it is appropriate for academic use. These are fundamentally critical-thinking skills, but they increasingly operate within digital environments. English language teaching can contribute directly to this process. Critical reading activities can ask students to compare two online articles, identify differences in evidence, analyze rhetorical strategies, evaluate language choices, and distinguish fact from opinion. Such activities develop English reading skills while simultaneously strengthening digital and information literacy. Writing instruction can similarly be expanded. Instead of limiting academic writing to conventional essays, students can be introduced to digital genres such as blogs, professional emails, online reviews, digital reports, podcasts, multimedia presentations, and reflective portfolios. These activities require students to consider audience and purpose and to adapt their language accordingly. Speaking and listening activities can also benefit from digital technology. Students can prepare recorded speeches, participate in virtual discussions, conduct online interviews, create podcasts, and deliver multimedia presentations. Such activities provide repeated opportunities for language practice and can create alternative forms of participation for students who may initially hesitate to speak before a large classroom audience.

The value of technology, however, depends on pedagogy. Technology by itself does not guarantee meaningful learning. UNESCO's *Global Education Monitoring Report 2023* emphasizes the importance of examining educational technology critically and ensuring that technology serves educational purposes rather than becoming an objective in itself (UNESCO, 2023). Technology should therefore be selected according to learning objectives, student needs, accessibility, and educational value. This principle is particularly important in English language education. A digital platform should not be introduced simply because it is technologically sophisticated. Its educational value depends on whether it provides students with meaningful opportunities to communicate, collaborate, receive feedback, reflect, and apply language. The capacity-building perspective consequently requires a movement from technology *consumption* to technology *application and creation*. Students should not merely

watch videos or download materials. They should create presentations, podcasts, digital stories, blogs, infographics, collaborative projects, and other forms of digital content. Content creation transforms students from passive consumers into active participants in knowledge production.

Such activities can simultaneously develop English proficiency and digital competence. Consider a student producing a five-minute educational podcast in English. The student must select a topic, research reliable information, organize ideas, write a script, consider audience, record speech, edit the audio, and evaluate the final product. The activity integrates reading, writing, speaking, listening, research, information literacy, digital production, creativity, and self-assessment.

Project-based learning provides another productive approach. Students can work collaboratively on authentic projects requiring research, communication, technology, and presentation. A project on local culture, for example, could involve interviewing community members, collecting information, writing English descriptions, preparing photographs or videos, and producing a digital magazine. Such a project connects academic English with students' local knowledge and experiences. This integration is especially relevant for institutions serving students from diverse backgrounds. Students do not enter higher education with identical levels of English proficiency or technological exposure. Some may have strong familiarity with smartphones and social media but limited experience with academic databases, word-processing software, digital presentations, or formal online communication. Others may have studied English for many years but remain hesitant to speak or write independently.

A capacity-building model should therefore begin from students' existing competencies rather than assuming uniform preparedness. Diagnostic assessment can identify strengths and gaps in reading, writing, speaking, listening, digital navigation, information searching, document preparation, presentation, and online communication. Institutions can then provide differentiated support.

English language development can be organized progressively. At a foundational level, students may require support in everyday communication, vocabulary, sentence construction, reading comprehension, and basic digital navigation. At an intermediate level, students can work on academic writing, presentations, research skills, and digital collaboration. At an advanced level, students can engage with professional communication, research writing, digital content creation, artificial intelligence, and career preparation.

This progression also addresses the problem of language anxiety. Students who have limited confidence in English may avoid speaking activities because they fear making mistakes. Digital tools can provide additional opportunities for practice through recorded presentations, pair activities, discussion boards, and asynchronous tasks. However, these tools should be combined with supportive teacher feedback and peer interaction. The role of the English teacher consequently changes within a digital capacity-building environment. The teacher becomes not only a language instructor but also a facilitator, mentor, learning designer, critical-literacy educator, and digital-content curator. The teacher helps students determine which information is reliable, which digital tools are appropriate, how language should be adapted to different contexts, and how technology can support rather than replace independent thinking.

Teacher capacity is therefore as important as student capacity. An institution cannot expect students to become digitally competent if teachers are not provided with appropriate professional development. Faculty development should include digital pedagogy, online assessment, multimedia production, information literacy, artificial intelligence, academic integrity, and inclusive technology practices. Artificial intelligence has made this issue particularly urgent. Generative AI tools can assist students in brainstorming, language practice, vocabulary development, drafting, editing, translation, and feedback. Used carefully, these technologies may provide additional learning opportunities. Used uncritically, however, they may encourage dependence, weaken independent writing, reproduce misinformation, or create problems concerning authorship and academic integrity.

Technological Proficiencies and the Evolving Academic Landscape

Digital literacy is more than only the capability to use a computer or smartphone. It encompasses the capacity to access, manage, assess, convey, generate, and engage via digital technology. UNESCO's initiatives around digital literacy and skills underscore the need of enhancing individuals' ability to utilise digital technology in a meaningful and responsible manner (UNESCO). For learners, digital proficiency encompasses several facets. These encompass fundamental technological competencies, information literacy, digital communication, content production, cybersecurity awareness, ethical online conduct, and the capacity to critically assess online information. The plethora of knowledge accessible on the internet has generated both prospects and obstacles. Learners may obtain vast amounts of material in only seconds; nevertheless, availability does not inherently ensure excellence.

Digital platforms encompass credible academic resources in addition to false information, distorted content, promotional material, and unsubstantiated assertions. Thus, learners require essential information literacy. They must learn to enquire who created a source, what evidence supports its statements, when it was published, what its goal is, and how it compares with other sources. Digital competence is consequently intimately tied to critical thinking. A digitally proficient student is not only someone who can utilise programs but someone who can make educated judgements regarding technology and information. The emergence of generative artificial intelligence has further strengthened this demand. Students increasingly face AI-assisted writing, translation, summarization, information search, and content-generation technologies. These tools can help learning when used responsibly, but they also create problems with academic integrity, authorship, accuracy, prejudice, privacy, and overdependence. Future-ready education must thus stress responsible and critical engagement with emerging technologies rather than treating technological adoption as an aim in itself.

Integrating English and Digital Skills

English language skills and digital abilities are mutually reinforcing. Digital settings give new contexts for language usage, while English competency helps students to participate more successfully in many digital places. For example, students can use English to explore academic resources, interact through online discussion boards, engage in webinars, produce digital presentations, and cooperate on international projects. At the same time, modern technologies give possibilities for pupils to practise English through real conversation. An English instructor can change standard classroom activities into digitally enhanced learning experiences. A standard essay-writing assignment, for instance, can be broadened into a research and internet communication project. Students may pick a topic, explore academic sources, analyse material, construct an outline, compose an essay, obtain peer comments using a collaborative platform, rewrite the text, and finally deliver their case through a digital presentation. Similarly, speaking exercises can be expanded through recorded presentations, podcasts, interviews, online conversations, and video-based projects. Such exercises give students with opportunity to enhance pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, organization, confidence, and digital presenting abilities concurrently. The merging of the two areas might therefore produce a more holistic learning experience. Instead of teaching "English skills" and "computer skills" as unconnected

disciplines, schools might construct learning challenges in which language and technology are organically linked.

Capacity Building as an Educational Approach

Capacity building refers broadly to the development of knowledge, skills, confidence, resources, and competencies that enable individuals and organisations to respond effectively to problems and opportunities. In education, capacity building should consequently focus on empowering students to become increasingly autonomous learners. A capacity-building method varies from a focused skills-training paradigm. Skills training may educate students how to accomplish a particular activity, whereas capacity development tries to enhance their ability to adapt as circumstances change. This difference is particularly relevant in a quickly changing technological context. A software program that pupils learn today may be replaced tomorrow. Therefore, the purpose should not merely be to educate them how to use one single program. Instead, they should create transferable digital learning skills that allow them to grasp and adapt to new technology. The same idea applies to English. Memorizing a predefined vocabulary list is less beneficial than having the ability to learn new vocabulary from reading, context, dictionaries, corpora, and internet resources. Similarly, knowing a certain writing structure is less valuable than understanding how to construct ideas, analyse evidence, consider audience, and communicate effectively. Capacity building thus encompasses four interrelated dimensions: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and adaptability. Students need knowledge of language and technology, practical skills for employing them, confidence and ethical awareness, and the ability to continue learning as circumstances develop

Theoretical Framework

UNESCO's AI Competency Framework for Students gives a valuable direction by stressing human-centred thinking, ethics, AI methodologies and applications, and AI system design. It also conceptualizes evolution from learning to applying and producing and encourages critical judgment and responsible citizenship (Miao et al., 2024). The consequence for English teaching is that students should not merely be taught how to receive responses from AI systems. They should learn how to assess AI-generated language, spot faults, verify facts, amend machine-generated writing, recognise acceptable usage, and keep their own creative contribution. AI can operate as a learning helper, but it should not replace the student's responsibilities for thinking and communicating. This idea links directly to academic honesty. Digital settings have

made copying and unlawful use of material simpler, while generative AI has confounded traditional understandings of authorship. Students consequently demand specific education in paraphrasing, reference, referencing, plagiarism, copyright, data privacy, and safe AI usage.

The increase of employability provides another major argument for merging English and digital skills. Contemporary workplaces increasingly need people to interact across digital platforms and adapt to technological change. The World Economic Forum's 2025 study ranks technical literacy among the fastest-growing talents while also highlighting analytical thinking, creative thinking, resilience, adaptability, agility, leadership, and lifelong learning. The relevance of this discovery rests in the combination of technology and human skills rather than in the replacement of one by the other. Higher education should consequently offer learning experiences that replicate actual professional interactions. Students can generate professional emails, resumes, digital portfolios, presentations, reports, project ideas, and interview reply. They can participate in simulated online interviews and collaborative workplace projects. These exercises help integrate classroom learning with prospective career situations. Digital portfolios can be very handy. Instead of showcasing students' growth exclusively through test results, portfolios might comprise writing samples, presentations, projects, films, reflections, certifications, comments, and amended assignments. The portfolio becomes proof of progressive ability growth.

Assessment itself consequently requires rethinking. Traditional examinations remain effective for testing certain sorts of knowledge, but they cannot fully capture communication, cooperation, creativity, digital content production, or problem-solving. A larger assessment system can include presentations, projects, portfolios, source-evaluation exercises, reflective writing, digital goods, group work, and spoken explanations.

The National Education Policy 2020 offers policy support for this approach by promoting competency-based assessment, portfolios, rubrics, assessment analytics, blended learning, and digital education. The policy also emphasises the need for digital infrastructure, digital content, and capacity building. Nevertheless, the combination of English and digital abilities confronts substantial hurdles. The first is the digital divide. Students may have uneven access to devices, dependable internet connectivity, software, and digital learning settings. The existence of a smartphone does not inevitably imply digital academic ability. Institutions must thus distinguish between informal technology usage and educational technology competency. A second concern is linguistic inequality. Students from diverse schooling backgrounds may

have dramatically varying levels of English exposure. If English proficiency is considered as a sign of intellectual aptitude rather than a developable skill, kids may encounter marginalisation. Capacity building demands supportive, progressive, and inclusive language development.

A third concern is teacher readiness. Technology integration demands time and professional growth. Teachers need chances to experiment with digital technologies, plan suitable activities, grasp privacy and ethical considerations, and evaluate if a particular technology actually helps learning. A fourth difficulty is information overload. Students may fail to differentiate genuine information from unreliable sources. Information literacy must consequently become an intrinsic component of English and research education. A final concern is the risk of technology reliance. Excessive dependence on automated technologies can restrict prospects for autonomous reasoning and original expression. Students need to recognise that technology should supplement learning rather than replace intellectual work. These problems imply that future-ready education must be both technology and human-centred. Technology should improve educational opportunities while preserving teacher-student interactions, conversation, reflection, creativity, and independent thought. From this approach, a helpful capacity-building framework may be constructed around five interrelated aspects. The first is communication ability, comprising listening, speaking, reading, writing, presenting, and professional communication. The second is digital competence, encompassing information literacy, digital communication, collaboration, content production, cybersecurity awareness, and technological problem-solving. The third is critical and creative thinking, helping students to analyse evidence, solve issues, discover ideas, and produce original material. The fourth is employability and lifetime learning, encompassing adaptation, professional communication, self-directed learning, and constant upskilling. The fifth is ethical and inclusive digital citizenship, covering privacy, copyright, academic integrity, responsible AI usage, courteous online communication, and awareness of uneven access.

These aspects are mutually reinforcing. Communication without digital skills may hinder involvement in technology-mediated professional situations. Digital competence without communication may hinder students' abilities to explain, negotiate, cooperate, and lead. Technical skill without critical thinking may leave pupils exposed to disinformation. Employability without ethical awareness may generate technically proficient but socially irresponsible technology users. The objective of capacity building is consequently to develop these abilities as an integrated whole.

Such integration may be performed through a very straightforward institutional cycle: diagnose, design, apply, reflect, and show. Institutions can first diagnose students' current language and digital competencies. They can then improve particular skills through organised courses and seminars. Students can use these abilities through genuine projects. They can reflect on their learning through notebooks or portfolios. Finally, individuals may demonstrate their ability through presentations, digital goods, professional activities, and academic work. This method can be particularly important at government-supported and residential higher-education institutions, where students may come from varied educational and social settings. Such institutions have the ability to employ English and digital education as instruments of educational inclusion rather than solely as methods for choosing already advantaged pupils.

The end objective is not to generate kids who just know more English or operate more digital instruments. The purpose is to enhance pupils' capacity to participate. Participation may involve participating to classroom discussions, obtaining academic information, engaging with experts, applying for jobs, generating digital content, doing research, cooperating with others, or continuing to study beyond graduation.

The combination of English and digital skills should thus be seen as an educational method for fostering student agency. When students can communicate ideas clearly, seek and assess information, utilise technology creatively, cooperate with others, and make responsible decisions, they develop increased capacity to handle changing circumstances. The idea of future preparedness thus has to be understood widely. A future-ready student is not only a technologically advanced student. Rather, future preparedness comprises the capacity to adapt knowledge and skills to new conditions while preserving critical judgment, creativity, communication, ethical awareness, and a commitment to ongoing learning.

Conclusion

The shifting environment of higher education and employment encourages institutions to reassess the abilities they create among students. Knowledge remains the foundation of education, but knowledge alone is insufficient in a world defined by fast technological development, artificial intelligence, digital communication, globalization, and increasing occupational requirements. English language competency and digital competence are increasingly interwoven features of this evolving educational landscape. English offers students with a way of acquiring knowledge, communicating ideas, participating in academic

communication, and interacting with professional and international networks. Digital competence enables them to access, assess, create, communicate, cooperate, and solve issues with technology. When developed collectively, these competences can become essential instruments of student capacity building. The data and policy frameworks discussed in this article demonstrate that technology competence must be accompanied by human skills. The World Economic Forum's current skills study sees technical literacy and AI-related competences as fast rising in relevance while continuing to prioritise analytical thinking, creativity, resilience, adaptability, leadership, and lifelong learning. UNESCO also supports responsible, ethical, human-centred approaches to artificial intelligence in education. The National Education Policy 2020 provides an Indian policy framework for technology-supported education, blended learning, digital infrastructure, capacity building, and competency-oriented assessment.

The primary consequence is that higher education should shift from fragmented skill development towards integrated capacity building. English should not be taught just as a topic, and digital technology should not be offered merely as a collection of tools. Both should become part of a bigger educational process that encourages communication, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, employability, flexibility, ethical awareness, and lifelong learning. The suggested five-dimensional framework—communication competence, digital competence, critical and creative thinking, employability and lifelong learning, and ethical and inclusive digital citizenship—provides a conceptual underpinning for this integration. It can inform curriculum design, classroom practice, student-support programmes, teacher development, evaluation, and institutional planning.

For English educators, this transition gives a chance to reframe language instruction as an important component of modern capacity building. English classrooms may become settings for digital storytelling, collaborative research, professional communication, critical reading, multimedia presentation, podcasting, digital writing, information appraisal, and responsible AI usage. Such activities can integrate language learning with students' academic, professional, and social situations.

For higher-education institutions, the task is to provide equal settings in which all students may acquire these skills. Infrastructure, teacher preparation, language assistance, digital access, inclusive pedagogy, and ongoing assessment are key components of such an institutional approach. Future-ready education should eventually be judged not merely by what

students remember at the conclusion of a course but by what they are capable of accomplishing when confronted with new issues, technology, information, and professional circumstances. The capacity to communicate, learn, adapt, analyse, create, cooperate, and behave ethically is likely to remain vital even as particular technology change. Thus, producing future-ready pupils through English language and digital abilities is not only a question of adding technology to language teaching. It is a larger process of growing human ability for engagement in an increasingly digital, linked, and fast changing world. When English proficiency and digital competence are combined via inclusive, critical, creative, and ethically grounded pedagogy, higher education may contribute greatly to generating confident communicators, effective digital citizens, flexible professionals, and lifelong learners.

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