

Factors affecting the improvement of the quality of teaching social sciences and humanities at university in the Current digital transformation context in Vietnam

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Abstract

Enhancing the quality of education in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) is a vital solution to safeguard the ideological foundation of the Communist Party of Vietnam in the current period. While there have been positive adjustments and innovations in teaching SSH subjects at the university in Vietnam, overall, the teaching quality remains limited, and students still lack in knowledge, character, and social-political competence. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, with a focus on digital transformation, presents numerous opportunities and challenges for Vietnam in the field of education, including SSH teaching at universities. This article addresses several factors influencing the improvement of teaching quality in SSH subjects at the university in the context of the ongoing digital transformation in Vietnam.

Keywords: Digital transformation, Fourth Industrial Revolution, teaching quality, social sciences and humanities

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I. The reality of teaching social sciences and humanities at the university in the context of digital transformation in Vietnam

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has significantly impacted all aspects of life with the emergence of new technological platforms such as IoT, Big Data, Cloud, AI, VR/AR. Digital transformation is a core element of the 4IR, based on digital technologies. According to Professor Ho Tu Bao (Vietnam Institute for Advanced Study in Mathematics - VIASM, Ho Chi Minh City National University, Vietnam), digital transformation is the process of changing how individuals and organizations live and work by applying digital technologies. It involves using data and digital technologies to comprehensively change the way we live and work.

In the field of education, digital transformation involves the application of digital technology in management, teaching, and learning. It includes digitizing materials and curriculum, establishing platforms for sharing teaching and learning resources both in direct and online formats, and personalizing learning content through the use of digital and smart technologies [3]. In Vietnam, in "National Digital Transformation Program by 2025, Oriented to 2030" prioritizes education and training as one of the top 8 areas for digital transformation.

In recent years, the education sector in Vietnam has shown a keen interest in integrating information technology into teaching activities, including the teaching of social sciences and humanities (SSH) subjects at the university.

Teaching, at its core, involves controlling students' cognitive and practical activities according to the laws of perception and skill development [4]. In the context of university SSH teaching, educators control students' cognitive and practical activities to foster skills, competence, and political integrity. Teaching activities of SSH educators encompass preparing for teaching, conducting teaching activities, and assessing students' learning outcomes.

In the Internet environment, teaching always follows pedagogical principles. However, technical factors and teaching technology have changed at all stages of teaching SSH subjects. These changes affect the entire teaching system, affecting the preparation and implementation of teaching, teaching organization and assessment of learning results.

Digital transformation in teaching will support SSH educators in delivering more effective teaching, allowing for more thorough differentiation in teaching. It will also impact all factors in the process of teaching SSH subjects, including infrastructure, classroom management techniques, the teaching environment, educators (preparing for teaching, organizing interactive teaching with students in the digital space, exploiting information technology for teaching, using active teaching methods, and personalizing learning content through the application of digital and smart technologies), and the assessment and evaluation of learning outcomes in SSH subjects.

II. Forecasting factors affecting improving the quality of social sciences and humanities teaching at the university in the context of digital transformation in Vietnam today

From the demand to enhance the quality of education and training at universities in Vietnam under the impact of the Industrial Revolution 4.0

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 creates opportunities and necessitates the construction of an education system 4.0. Education 4.0 or smart education has directly and strongly influenced higher education in Vietnam in general, and social sciences and humanities education in particular, to meet the demand for high-quality human resources for the new labor market. According to the spirit of the 13th National Party Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, there is an emphasis on digital transformation in the field of education and training, with the strategy: "Developing human resources, education, and training to meet the high-quality human resource requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and international integration"; "Training individuals with ethics, discipline, determination, awareness of civic responsibility, society; having life skills, work skills, foreign languages, information technology, digital technology, creative thinking, and international integration (global citizens)" [2]. Therefore, one of the important requirements for education and training highlighted by the 13th Party Congress is to train in information technology, digital technology, contributing to the development of the country's human resources to meet the development requirements in the context of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and extensive international integration today.

In light of the profound impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, universities in Vietnam must have a profound understanding of the role and necessity of building Education 4.0. This begins with a deep understanding and full adherence to the principles, policies, and strategies regarding the enhancement of the quality of education and training in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, especially in line with the National Digital Transformation Program by 2025, oriented to 2030, approved by the Prime Minister of Vietnam on June 3, 2020. These changes necessitate that Vietnamese universities renew and enhance the quality of education and training. To achieve this, a crucial step is to innovate the content linked with innovative teaching methods, aimed at improving the quality of teaching—the most important factor in the education and training process.

From the transformation and expanded objectives of teaching social sciences and humanities, the education of Vietnamese students aims to shape them into digital citizens for the future.

With the goal of transforming Vietnam into a digital nation, the national digital transformation program sets the objective of developing digital skills for all Vietnamese citizens. A Digital citizen is someone who understands and adapts to the use of information technology, advances in science and technology, to connect and engage with those around them. The criteria for evaluating a digital citizen often rely on basic skills such as digital access, digital commerce, digital communication, digital knowledge, digital etiquette, digital laws, digital rights and responsibilities, physical and mental health in the digital realm, and digital security. Among these, skills related to digital law emphasize the need for digital citizens to adhere to principles, rules, and social standards, aiming to regulate human behavior in the online space [1].

The courses in social sciences and humanities have inherent characteristics that are highly abstract and generalized, aiming to educate students on worldview, methodologies, philosophies, and professional ethics. However, with the advent of virtual reality experiences in three-dimensional spaces, the limitations of physical space are eliminated. Students are now exposed to interactive and immersive scenarios beyond their daily lives, encountering a wealth of visual educational resources. This allows them to witness situations they may encounter in real life, familiarize themselves with professional working environments, thereby developing the ability to assess and analyze appropriate behaviors in various situations. This approach fosters the acquisition of skills, techniques, and professional qualities. Students also gain a heightened sense of responsibility towards their community and society. Through digital connectivity tools, the educational environment is clearly shaped, enabling students to communicate and interact in a friendly and cooperative manner.

The competencies of the faculty in the social sciences and humanities departments at Vietnamese universities today

The digital transformation is not limited to digital documents and online teaching; it involves a comprehensive shift in teaching methods, classroom management techniques, and interaction with students into the digital space. To enhance the ability to access and leverage the achievements of the industry 4.0 revolution, meeting the requirements of digital transformation in teaching, faculty members in the social sciences and humanities departments at Vietnamese universities need to meet certain qualifications in information technology and digital literacy. This requirement has been clearly outlined in the content of the digital transformation in higher education program, part of the National Digital Transformation Program until 2025, with an orientation towards 2030.

The digital competence of university faculty, particularly those in the social sciences and humanities, should encompass fundamental aspects such as operating technology and software, data processing and creativity, communication and collaboration skills, as well as cybersecurity and safety awareness. Faculty members

specializing in the social sciences and humanities, with high-level expertise in information technology, who rigorously apply digital technology in their teaching activities, will play a pioneering role in developing digital competence. They will significantly contribute to the process of self-training, nurturing, and supporting their colleagues, thereby enhancing the overall quality of teaching in the social sciences and humanities at Vietnamese universities amid the ongoing digital transformation.

In summary, digital transformation in teaching is an inevitable trend. To improve the quality of teaching in social sciences and humanities at Vietnamese universities, educators must change their perception of digital transformation, seize timely opportunities, and overcome challenges posed by the objective requirements of digital transformation. They must adapt to the changing and expanding objectives of teaching social sciences and humanities, aiming to educate students as future digital citizens. The subjective factor of social sciences and humanities educators is crucial in this process, and their commitment to enhancing teaching quality plays a vital role in the context of digital transformation.

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