

The Relationship Between Students' Digital Competence and Self-Efficacy: Implications for Educational Practices

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Abstract In the digital age, students' ability to effectively use technology—termed digital competence—has become essential for academic success and lifelong learning. Concurrently, self-efficacy, or individuals' belief in their capabilities to execute tasks, plays a crucial role in determining their engagement and performance. This paper explores the relationship between students' digital competence and their self-efficacy, examining how these factors influence one another and their implications for educational practices. By analyzing relevant literature and empirical studies, the paper aims to provide insights into how educators can foster both digital skills and self-efficacy among students.

Keywords Vocational Education; STEAM Education; Educational Practices

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Introduction

The integration of technology into education has transformed traditional learning environments, necessitating that students develop digital competence. Digital competence encompasses a range of skills, including information literacy, online communication, and the ability to use digital tools effectively. As educational institutions increasingly rely on technology for teaching and learning, understanding the factors that influence students' digital competence becomes paramount. Self-efficacy, a concept introduced by Bandura (1977), refers to an individual's belief in their ability to accomplish specific tasks. This belief can significantly affect motivation, effort, and resilience in the face of

challenges. In the context of education, students with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage actively in learning activities, persist through difficulties, and achieve better academic outcomes. This paper seeks to investigate the relationship between students' digital competence and self-efficacy, exploring how these constructs interact and their implications for educational practices. By analyzing relevant studies and theories, the paper aims to highlight strategies that educators can employ to enhance both digital skills and self-efficacy among students.

Theoretical Framework

To understand the interplay between digital competence and self-efficacy, it is essential to establish a theoretical framework. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) provides a robust foundation for exploring self-efficacy, positing that individuals' beliefs about their capabilities are shaped by personal experiences, observations of others, and social influences.

Digital competence can be understood through the lens of the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu), which outlines various competencies that educators and students should develop in a digital age. This framework emphasizes the importance of not only technical skills but also critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration in digital environments. Integrating these theories allows for a comprehensive understanding of how students' beliefs about their digital abilities (self-efficacy) influence their actual competencies and vice versa. Furthermore, this framework emphasizes the role of educational environments in shaping both self-efficacy and digital competence.

Digital Competence: Definition and Importance

Digital competence encompasses a wide range of skills necessary for navigating the digital landscape. According to the European Commission (2018), digital competence includes the ability to: The capacity to identify, locate, evaluate, and use digital information effectively. Skills for interacting with others through digital platforms, sharing information, and collaborating on projects. The ability to create and edit digital content, including text, images, and videos. Understanding online safety issues, such as privacy, security, and digital rights. The capacity to identify and resolve technical problems in digital environments.

The importance of digital competence in education cannot be overstated. In an increasingly digital world, students must be equipped with the skills necessary to thrive academically and professionally. Moreover, digital competence is closely linked to employability, as employers increasingly seek candidates with strong digital skills. Research indicates that students with higher levels of digital competence tend to perform better academically and are more prepared for the workforce. For instance, a study by Teo and Lim (2013) found a positive correlation between students' digital skills and their academic performance, suggesting that those who are proficient in digital technologies are better equipped to succeed in their studies.

Self-Efficacy in Education

Self-efficacy plays a vital role in shaping students' academic experiences and outcomes. Originating from Bandura's (1977) Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their

ability to successfully execute specific tasks or achieve goals. This belief influences not only motivation and behavior but also the level of effort students are willing to invest in their academic pursuits.

Sources of Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura (1997), there are four primary sources of self-efficacy: Successful experiences bolster self-efficacy beliefs. When students accomplish a task, they gain confidence in their abilities. Conversely, repeated failures can diminish self-efficacy. For instance, a student who successfully completes a challenging project using digital tools is likely to feel more competent and willing to tackle similar tasks in the future. Teachers can facilitate mastery experiences by providing appropriately challenging tasks that gradually increase in complexity, allowing students to build their skills over time. Observing peers succeed can enhance self-efficacy, particularly if students identify with those they observe. For example, when students see their classmates successfully using technology in a presentation, they may believe they can achieve similar success. This source of self-efficacy underscores the importance of collaborative learning environments, where students can learn from one another's successes and challenges. Encouragement from teachers, peers, and family members can significantly influence self-efficacy beliefs. Positive reinforcement and constructive feedback can motivate students to persevere in the face of challenges. For instance, a teacher who acknowledges a student's effort in using a new digital tool can bolster that student's confidence, encouraging them to continue exploring technology in their studies. Students' emotional responses and physical states also play a role in shaping self-efficacy. Feelings of anxiety, stress, or fatigue can negatively impact students' beliefs in their abilities. Educators can help students manage these emotional states by creating a supportive classroom environment and teaching stress-reduction techniques. For example, incorporating mindfulness practices or providing breaks during technology-heavy tasks can help alleviate anxiety and improve focus.

The Impact of Self-Efficacy on Academic Performance

Self-efficacy is a significant predictor of academic performance. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in challenging tasks, persist through difficulties, and achieve better academic outcomes. Research shows that self-efficacy influences not only students' motivation to learn but also their actual performance in various subjects, including technology-related tasks (Schunk, 1991). In the realm of digital learning, self-efficacy becomes even more critical. As educational technology evolves, students encounter new tools and platforms that may initially seem daunting. Those with high self-efficacy are more inclined to explore these tools, seek assistance when needed, and experiment with different functionalities. Conversely, students with low self-efficacy may avoid technology-related tasks altogether, fearing failure or inadequacy.

Strategies for Enhancing Self-Efficacy in Students

Educators can implement several strategies to enhance self-efficacy among students: Encouraging students to set achievable, specific, and measurable goals can foster a sense of accomplishment. As students meet these goals, their self-efficacy is likely to increase. Teachers can model tasks and demonstrate effective use of technology. By showcasing their own problem-solving processes, educators

can provide students with concrete examples of how to approach challenges. A classroom culture that celebrates effort and resilience can significantly impact students' self-efficacy. By promoting a growth mindset, educators encourage students to view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable obstacles. Timely and specific feedback helps students understand their progress and areas for improvement. Educators should focus on effort and strategies rather than solely on outcomes, reinforcing the idea that skills can be developed through practice. By understanding the components and significance of self-efficacy in education, educators can implement strategies that foster students' confidence and motivation. This, in turn, enhances their engagement with learning, particularly in technology-rich environments, ultimately leading to improved academic performance and digital competence.

The Relationship Between Digital Competence and Self-Efficacy

The relationship between digital competence and self-efficacy is bidirectional. On one hand, students with higher digital competence tend to have greater self-efficacy regarding their technology use. As they develop skills and successfully navigate digital platforms, they build confidence in their abilities. This is supported by findings from a study conducted by van Deursen and van Dijk (2014), which revealed that individuals with higher digital skills reported greater confidence in using technology.

On the other hand, students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage in activities that enhance their digital competence. They are willing to explore new technologies, seek help when needed, and persist through challenges. Research by Hasler et al. (2018) indicates that self-efficacy significantly predicts students' willingness to engage in online learning, highlighting the importance of fostering positive self-beliefs in digital contexts.

Moreover, the interplay between digital competence and self-efficacy can be influenced by various contextual factors, such as the educational environment, teacher support, and peer interactions. For example, supportive teaching practices that encourage exploration and risk-taking can enhance both self-efficacy and digital skills. Conversely, negative experiences or lack of support can undermine students' confidence and hinder skill development.

Implications for Educational Practices

Understanding the relationship between digital competence and self-efficacy holds profound implications for how educators design and implement learning experiences in the classroom. Both of these constructs play a crucial role in determining how students approach, engage with, and succeed in digital learning environments. Digital competence refers to the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to effectively use digital technologies for various tasks, while self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their own ability to succeed in specific situations. By fostering both digital competence and self-efficacy, educators can help students become confident, capable learners in the digital age.

One of the primary implications of this relationship is the need for educators to intentionally design learning experiences that build both digital competence and self-efficacy. This requires a shift from simply teaching students how to use digital tools to creating opportunities for them to engage in meaningful, technology-driven learning experiences. These experiences should be designed to not only teach technical skills but also empower students to feel confident in their ability to navigate and

succeed in digital environments. By doing so, educators can help students develop the resilience, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that are essential for success in a world that is increasingly reliant on digital technologies.

Another implication is the need for ongoing professional development for educators. As technology continues to evolve, so too must the approaches that educators use to foster digital competence and self-efficacy in their students. Teachers must stay informed about the latest digital tools and educational technologies, and they must continuously refine their instructional strategies to meet the changing needs of their students. This highlights the importance of creating systems and structures that support ongoing learning and professional growth for educators, ensuring that they are equipped to help students thrive in the digital age.

Providing Opportunities for Mastery Experiences

Creating experiences play a critical role in the development of both digital competence and self-efficacy. According to Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, mastery experiences are one of the most powerful sources of self-efficacy beliefs. When individuals successfully complete tasks, they build confidence in their ability to replicate that success in the future. For students, this means that providing opportunities for them to experience success with digital technologies is essential for building both their technical skills and their belief in their ability to use these skills effectively.

To create mastery experiences, educators must design learning activities that are appropriately challenging yet achievable for students at different levels of digital competence. This requires a deep understanding of each student's current skill level and the ability to scaffold tasks in a way that supports growth. For instance, a teacher might begin by introducing students to basic digital tools, such as word processing software or online research platforms. As students gain proficiency with these tools, the teacher can introduce more complex tasks, such as creating multimedia presentations, designing websites, or coding simple applications.

Project-based learning (PBL) is an effective pedagogical approach for providing mastery experiences in the digital domain. In PBL, students work on extended projects that require the application of digital tools and skills. These projects often mirror real-world challenges, making the learning experience more engaging and relevant for students. For example, a teacher might ask students to create a website that showcases their research on a particular topic or to develop a digital presentation that includes multimedia elements such as videos, images, and sound. By working through these projects, students have the opportunity to practice and refine their digital skills, and as they experience success, their self-efficacy increases.

It's important for educators to recognize that mastery experiences don't always come from easy success. In fact, overcoming challenges and persevering through difficulties can be even more powerful for building self-efficacy. When students encounter obstacles while working on digital tasks—whether it's troubleshooting a technical issue or figuring out how to use a new tool—they learn valuable problem-solving skills. By providing support and guidance during these moments, educators can help students view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than as setbacks. This not only builds digital competence but also fosters a growth mindset, where students believe that their abilities can improve with effort and practice. Ultimately, the goal is to create a learning environment where students feel empowered to take risks, experiment with new technologies, and push the boundaries of their

digital competence. By providing structured opportunities for mastery experiences, educators can help students build both the skills and the confidence they need to succeed in an increasingly digital world.

Encouraging Peer Collaboration

Peer collaboration is a powerful tool for enhancing both digital competence and self-efficacy in students. Collaborative learning environments allow students to share their knowledge and skills, learn from one another, and build confidence through social interactions. When students work together on digital projects, they not only develop their technical skills but also gain the support and encouragement they need to persevere through challenges. This collective approach to learning helps to create a classroom culture where students feel empowered to take risks, experiment with new technologies, and support each other's growth.

One of the key benefits of peer collaboration is the opportunity for students to engage in active learning. Unlike passive learning, where students simply receive information from the teacher, active learning involves students in the process of discovering, exploring, and applying new knowledge. In a collaborative setting, students take on different roles and responsibilities, working together to solve problems, complete tasks, and achieve common goals. This type of learning is particularly effective in building digital competence because it requires students to engage directly with the tools and technologies they are learning about.

For example, a teacher might assign a group project where students are tasked with creating a digital presentation or developing a website. In this scenario, each student might take on a different role based on their strengths and interests—one student might focus on design, another on research, and another on technical implementation. As they work together, they learn from each other's expertise and build their own skills in the process. Additionally, collaborative projects often involve problem-solving and critical thinking, as students must work through challenges and make decisions as a team. This type of learning helps to build both digital competence and self-efficacy, as students gain confidence in their ability to contribute to the group's success.

Peer collaboration also provides opportunities for students to give and receive feedback, which is another important factor in building self-efficacy. When students receive constructive feedback from their peers, they gain valuable insights into their strengths and areas for improvement. This feedback helps them to recognize their progress and set goals for further development. Similarly, when students offer feedback to their peers, they reinforce their own understanding of the material and develop a deeper sense of ownership over their learning. This process of mutual support and feedback fosters a positive learning environment where students feel confident in their abilities and motivated to continue improving.

In addition to building digital competence, peer collaboration helps to develop important social and communication skills. In today's digital world, the ability to collaborate effectively with others is a critical skill, whether in academic settings or in the workplace. By working together on digital projects, students learn how to communicate their ideas clearly, listen to and incorporate feedback from others, and negotiate different perspectives. These skills are not only essential for success in digital learning but also for success in life.

Educators can encourage peer collaboration by designing group projects, facilitating peer review sessions, and creating opportunities for students to work together on shared digital tasks. It's important

to provide clear guidelines and structures to support collaboration, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to contribute and participate. By fostering a collaborative learning environment, educators can help students build the digital skills and self-efficacy they need to thrive in the digital age.

Implementing Formative Assessment and Feedback

Formative assessment and feedback are essential components of an effective educational strategy for building both digital competence and self-efficacy. Formative assessments are ongoing assessments that occur during the learning process, rather than at the end of a unit or course. These assessments provide valuable information about students' progress, allowing both students and teachers to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and next steps in learning. When combined with timely and constructive feedback, formative assessments can help students develop a deeper understanding of their own learning process and build confidence in their digital abilities.

One of the primary benefits of formative assessment is that it allows educators to provide immediate feedback on students' performance. This feedback is critical for helping students recognize their progress and understand what they need to do to improve. For example, after completing a digital project, a teacher might provide specific feedback on areas where the student excelled, such as their use of design principles or their ability to navigate a particular software program. At the same time, the teacher can point out areas where the student can improve, such as troubleshooting technical issues or refining their use of multimedia elements. This targeted feedback helps students see their growth and provides a clear path for continued development.

In addition to teacher feedback, self-assessment and peer feedback can play an important role in formative assessment. Self-assessment encourages students to reflect on their own learning, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for improvement. This reflective process helps students develop a sense of ownership over their learning and fosters a growth mindset, where they view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than as obstacles. For example, a student might complete a digital portfolio of their work and then reflect on their progress, identifying areas where they have improved and areas where they still need to develop. This process helps to build both digital competence and self-efficacy by encouraging students to take an active role in their learning.

Peer feedback is another valuable component of formative assessment. When students review each other's work, they not only gain insights into their own learning but also learn how to give and receive constructive criticism. Peer feedback sessions can be structured around specific criteria, such as the use of digital tools, the effectiveness of communication, or the creativity of the final product. This type of feedback helps students see their work from a different perspective and encourages them to think critically about their digital skills. Moreover, receiving positive feedback from peers can boost students' self-efficacy, as they realize that their work is valued and appreciated by others.

It's important for educators to create a classroom environment where feedback is seen as a tool for growth rather than as a judgment of ability. By framing feedback as a positive and supportive process, teachers can help students develop resilience and a willingness to take risks in their digital learning. Additionally, formative assessment should be used not only to assess student performance but also to inform instructional decisions. By regularly assessing students' digital skills, teachers can adjust their teaching strategies to meet the needs of individual students, providing additional support or challenges as necessary.

Ultimately, the goal of formative assessment and feedback is to create a learning environment where students feel supported and motivated to continue developing their digital competence. By providing regular, constructive feedback and encouraging self-assessment and reflection, educators can help students build both the skills and the confidence they need to succeed in the digital world.

Cultivating a Supportive Learning Environment

Creating a supportive learning environment is critical for fostering both digital competence and self-efficacy. A supportive environment encourages students to take risks, experiment with new technologies, and view challenges as opportunities for growth. It promotes a growth mindset, where students believe that their abilities can be developed through effort and persistence. This type of environment is especially important when it comes to digital learning, as many students may feel anxious or uncertain about their ability to succeed with new technologies.

One of the key elements of a supportive learning environment is the promotion of a growth mindset. According to psychologist Carol Dweck, individuals with a growth mindset believe that their abilities can be developed through hard work, dedication, and learning from mistakes. In contrast, individuals with a fixed mindset believe that their abilities are innate and unchangeable. In a digital learning context, promoting a growth mindset means encouraging students to see challenges with technology not as failures, but as opportunities to learn and grow. For example, if a student encounters difficulties with a new software program, the teacher might emphasize that learning how to troubleshoot and solve problems is an important part of developing digital competence.

Teachers can also foster a growth mindset by modeling a positive attitude toward learning and technology. This might involve openly discussing the challenges and frustrations that come with learning new digital tools and demonstrating how to persevere through these challenges. By sharing their own experiences and showing that they too are continuously learning, teachers can create a classroom culture where mistakes are seen as a natural and valuable part of the learning process.

Providing encouragement and positive reinforcement is another important aspect of a supportive learning environment. When students feel that their efforts are recognized and appreciated, they are more likely to take risks and push themselves to try new things. Teachers can offer praise and constructive feedback when students demonstrate progress, no matter how small. For example, a teacher might celebrate a student's success in figuring out a complex digital task or acknowledge their persistence in overcoming a technical challenge. This type of encouragement helps to build students' self-efficacy by reinforcing their belief that they can succeed in digital learning.

In addition to promoting a growth mindset and providing encouragement, it's important for educators to create a classroom environment that feels safe and inclusive for all students. This includes ensuring that students have equal access to digital tools and resources, as well as creating opportunities for all students to participate in digital learning activities. Teachers can also foster a sense of community in the classroom by encouraging collaboration and peer support. When students feel that they are part of a supportive learning community, they are more likely to engage in digital learning and take ownership of their learning process. Finally, it's important for educators to provide students with the tools and resources they need to succeed in digital learning. This might include providing access to digital devices, software programs, and online resources, as well as offering guidance and support as students navigate these tools. Teachers can also create opportunities for students to seek help when

they encounter difficulties, whether through one-on-one support, peer tutoring, or online resources. By providing students with the necessary support and resources, educators can help them build the confidence and skills they need to succeed in the digital age.

In summary, cultivating a supportive learning environment is essential for fostering both digital competence and self-efficacy. By promoting a growth mindset, providing encouragement, and ensuring equal access to digital tools and resources, educators can create a classroom culture where students feel empowered to take risks, experiment with new technologies, and develop the skills and confidence they need to succeed in the digital world.

Professional Development for Educators

As technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, professional development for educators is crucial in ensuring that teachers are equipped to foster both digital competence and self-efficacy in their students. In the digital age, it is not enough for educators to simply be familiar with technology; they must also be able to integrate digital tools into their teaching in meaningful ways that enhance student learning. Professional development programs play a key role in helping educators develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to succeed in this task.

Effective professional development for educators in the digital age should focus on several key areas. First and foremost, educators need to develop their own digital competence. This includes not only technical skills, such as the ability to use digital devices and software programs, but also a deeper understanding of how digital tools can be used to enhance teaching and learning. Professional development programs should provide opportunities for educators to explore a wide range of digital tools, from basic productivity software to more advanced tools such as learning management systems, multimedia creation tools, and educational apps. By gaining hands-on experience with these tools, educators can develop the skills they need to integrate them into their teaching.

In addition to technical skills, professional development programs should also focus on pedagogical strategies for using digital tools effectively in the classroom. This includes understanding how to design digital learning experiences that are engaging, interactive, and aligned with learning objectives. For example, educators might learn how to use project-based learning to foster digital competence, or how to incorporate digital tools into formative assessment practices. Professional development should also address issues such as digital equity, ensuring that all students have access to the tools and resources they need to succeed in a digital learning environment.

Another important aspect of professional development is fostering a sense of digital self-efficacy in educators themselves. Just as students need to build confidence in their ability to use digital tools, so too do teachers. Many educators may feel overwhelmed or uncertain about their ability to effectively integrate technology into their teaching, especially if they are less familiar with digital tools. Professional development programs should provide ongoing support and encouragement, helping educators build their confidence and competence over time. This might include mentoring or coaching from more experienced colleagues, as well as opportunities to collaborate with peers and share best practices.

Ongoing professional development is particularly important in the digital age, as new tools and technologies are constantly emerging. Educators must stay up-to-date with the latest developments in educational technology and continuously refine their teaching strategies to meet the needs of their

students. Professional learning communities, online courses, and workshops can provide educators with the ongoing support they need to stay current with the latest trends and innovations in digital education.

In addition to formal professional development programs, educators can also benefit from informal learning opportunities, such as attending conferences, participating in online forums, and engaging in self-directed learning. Many educators find that collaborating with peers and sharing ideas in informal settings can be a valuable way to gain new insights and inspiration. Social media platforms such as Twitter and LinkedIn, as well as online communities such as EdTech groups, offer educators the chance to connect with colleagues from around the world and learn from their experiences. Professional development for educators is essential for fostering both digital competence and self-efficacy in students. By providing educators with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to integrate digital tools into their teaching, professional development programs play a critical role in preparing students for success in the digital age. Ongoing learning and support are key to ensuring that educators stay current with the latest developments in educational technology and continue to refine their teaching practices to meet the needs of their students

Tailored Training Programs

Effective professional development should be tailored to meet the specific needs of educators. This can involve assessing the current digital competencies of teachers and identifying areas for growth. Tailored training programs can include workshops, online courses, and collaborative learning communities that focus on relevant topics, such as:

Educators should learn how to seamlessly incorporate digital tools into their teaching practices. This includes understanding how to use learning management systems, digital assessment tools, and collaborative platforms effectively. Pedagogical Approaches for Digital Learning^{**}: Training should cover various pedagogical models, such as blended learning, flipped classrooms, and project-based learning, that leverage technology to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Educators must also be equipped to teach critical digital literacy skills, enabling students to navigate, evaluate, and create content responsibly. This includes understanding digital rights, online safety, and the ethical use of information.

Collaborative Learning Opportunities

Creating opportunities for collaborative learning among educators can enhance professional development. Teachers can benefit from sharing experiences, resources, and best practices with their peers. Collaborative opportunities can include: Establishing a peer coaching system allows experienced teachers to mentor less experienced colleagues. This support can help build confidence and share effective strategies for integrating technology. Forming PLCs focused on digital competence allows educators to engage in ongoing discussions about technology integration, share challenges, and collectively problem-solve. These communities can foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

Ongoing Support and Resources

Professional development should not be a one-time event; it must be ongoing and supplemented with continuous support and resources. Educators should have access to: Creating a centralized hub for digital resources, lesson plans, and instructional materials can support educators as they implement new strategies in their classrooms. Scheduling follow-up sessions after initial training can reinforce concepts learned and provide opportunities for educators to ask questions and seek advice on implementation challenges. Access to Expert Guidance: Providing access to technology integration specialists or instructional coaches can offer educators personalized support and guidance tailored to their specific needs.

Evaluating Professional Development Impact

To ensure that professional development efforts are effective, schools should implement evaluation mechanisms to assess their impact on educators' digital competence and self-efficacy. Evaluation can include: Collecting feedback from educators about the relevance and effectiveness of training programs can inform future professional development initiatives. Classroom Observations: Conducting classroom observations can help identify changes in teaching practices and the integration of technology in the classroom. Student Outcomes: Monitoring student engagement, performance, and digital competence can provide insights into the effectiveness of professional development in enhancing educational practices. By prioritizing professional development that is tailored, collaborative, and ongoing, educators can enhance their digital competence and self-efficacy. This, in turn, will enable them to create more effective learning environments that foster students' digital skills and confidence in using technology.

Conclusion

The relationship between students' digital competence and self-efficacy is deeply interconnected and essential for success in today's technology-driven world. Digital competence refers to the ability to use technology effectively, while self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to succeed. When students improve their digital skills, their confidence grows, which boosts their self-efficacy. At the same time, students with strong self-efficacy are more likely to take on challenges, explore new technologies, and further develop their digital skills. To nurture both, educators should provide opportunities for students to build their skills through hands-on experiences, offer regular feedback, and create a supportive environment that encourages growth. Peer collaboration, project-based learning, and formative assessments can help students improve their digital abilities while building their belief in their capacity to succeed.

A supportive learning environment is crucial for fostering this development. By promoting a growth mindset, where challenges are seen as learning opportunities, and by providing encouragement and recognition of students' progress, educators can help students feel motivated and confident. At the same time, professional development for educators is essential to ensure they have the knowledge and confidence to effectively guide students in developing digital competence. When teachers are equipped with the right tools and strategies, they can help students thrive in a world that increasingly relies on digital skills. Ultimately, fostering both digital competence and self-efficacy prepares students to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the digital age with confidence and success.

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