Patterns, Intentions, and Effectiveness of Digital Pedagogies in Immigrant Learning in British Columbia

Kashif Raza | Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Educational Studies, UBC Vancouver

Afsaneh Abbaszadeh | Master's Student, Educational Studies, UBC Vancouver

Migration introduces numerous challenges for immigrants, including language barriers, non-recognition of credentials, and difficulties navigating new cultural and institutional systems (Cheng et al., 2021; Liu & Guo, 2021; Raihan et al., 2023). These challenges can hinder immigrants' ability to rebuild their lives and establish a sense of belonging within their host communities. Digital technologies, such as online learning platforms, language learning applications, and virtual mentorship programs, hold great potential for addressing these challenges (AbuJarour, 2022; Au et al., 2024; Yuen & Schlote, 2024). By enhancing educational access, these tools can play a pivotal role in supporting socio-cultural integration and fostering a sense of belonging among immigrants (Ahmed & Veronis, 2019; Barker, 2021; Drydakis, 2021).

Our study examines the role of digital technologies in supporting immigrant learning and integration in British Columbia, focusing on three key areas: language acquisition, socio-cultural integration, and professional skill development. Using a mixed-methods research approach, we report findings from document analysis, an online survey, and semi-structured interviews with instructors from settlement agencies and adult immigrants. Document analysis included a literature review and analysis of publicly available reports from government and non-profit organizations to identify existing digital practices and tools to create an initial typology of digital technologies, pedagogical approaches, and program offerings. Survey results provided baseline data about the use of digital technologies by instructors for immigrant training and learning. Semi-structured interviews with immigrant learners and instructors focused on the effectiveness of using digital technologies and areas for improvement. In addition to documenting diverse digital technologies used in immigrant training and learning in BC, our study reports patterns, intentions and effectiveness of these technologies and provides recommendations for enhancing inclusivity, accessibility and efficacy in digital education for adult immigrants.

The presentation will begin with an overview of the literature on the use of digital technology in immigrant training and findings from document analysis, followed by a discussion on survey results and interview findings. It will conclude with policy recommendations to enhance and foster equitable, accessible, and inclusive digital education-informed learning opportunities for immigrants.