

ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS IN EDUCATION

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Abstract

Research in the educational field is one of the professional obligations of every educator, enabling them to enhance their own competencies, deepen their knowledge of the subject matter, and analyze collected data to arrive at new insights. Empirical research utilizing the interview method was driven by the need to gather and interpret data regarding situations such as the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic. The interview consisted of 12 to 13 questions concerning the use of technology (phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) by teachers, students, and support staff at the high school level.

Key words: technology, student, teacher, interview, research method

Introduction

The term "**interview**" originates from the French "entrevue", denoting a face-to-face meeting between two or more people; however, the term has also become established in Anglo-Saxon practice as "interview." The interview is a form of oral communication—common in journalism and sociology—based on a system of direct questioning, with the shared goal of obtaining various types of information through a process of questions and answers.

A definition of the interview is proposed by Yvan Bordeleau (1997). According to the author, the interview is "a method of scientific inquiry based on the interaction between interviewer and interviewee."¹

Alain Blanchet (1985) considers that a minimal definition of the interview should be as follows: "The interview is a conversation between two people—an interviewer and an interviewee—conducted and recorded by the interviewer. The purpose of this conversation is to facilitate the production of discourse on a topic defined by a research framework."²

"Originally, the interview is a type of social and verbal interaction belonging to the realm of diplomacy—predating and existing outside the formation of the social sciences and their methodological tools—denoting a discussion between equals, such as two sovereigns. However, the emergence of the so-called 'indirect' approach is considered to have occurred more recently—in 1929—at Western Electric, where an evaluation study was conducted using a new style; this was described, discussed, and theorized in 1943 by Roethlisberger and Dickson, who are regarded as the founders of the research interview."³

While the inception of the research interview is recent and easily dated, its lineage is older and, at the same time, more complex. Indeed, what drove the transformation of the inquiry protocol—what allowed the investigator's question to be replaced by that of the subject—was a broader shift in the ways populations were questioned (at the time, the destitute and indigenous

peoples) and the emergence of a new mode of investigating Man. The shift from the questionnaire to the interview is thus linked not only to the fact that the social survey itself broke away from the interrogation, but also to the transformation of the anthropological view of distant societies and the shifts in the therapeutic attitude toward mental illness.”⁴

The interview is considered an alternative research method (Oprea, C. L., 2006), alongside "individual and group portfolios, concept maps, case studies, projects, investigations, reflective journals, systematic observation of student activity and behavior, (the interview), the 3-2-1 technique, the R.A.I. method, audio and/or video recordings, and student personal activity sheets.”⁵

Research topic: the use of technology in educational institutions (teaching/learning/administration)—a micro-research study based on structured interviews.

This research proposes the following subjects: two high school teachers, two high school students, and two members of the auxiliary staff. Differences in opinion may stem from disparities in age and/or ideology. Chris Jones (2011) argues that "the existence of an environment allowing access to digital technologies and the Internet, combined with active engagement with these technologies, leads to a generational divide"⁶—referring to the core concept behind the term "*digital native*".

Table No. 1: Questions/Answers – Interviewed Teaching Staff

Subject no. 1, teacher	Subject no. 2, teacher
Question No. 1: Do you consider technology useful in the educational process?	
Answer: The use of technology in the educational process represented a paradigm shift in the past, but today it is a necessity, given the familiarity with which young people approach gadgets and applications.	Answer: Technology in education—as numerous neuroscience experts assert—is extremely harmful. This conclusion is also supported by common sense. Exposure to screens from an early age has devastating effects on a child's brain development. The lack of complex stimulation—characteristic of an experience-rich childhood—resulting from exposure to digital gadgets leads to poor neuroplasticity during this critical developmental stage. What is harmful to the child is also detrimental to the educational process.
Question No. 2: How often do you use technology during the lesson/module?	
Answer: Given that I teach technical subjects, the nature of my specialization requires me to make extensive use of applications and websites for the simulation and design of basic elements covered in the curriculum.	Answer 2: I use technology as sparingly as possible because the interface of digital technology deprives the child of the specific stimuli associated with complex practical tasks—such as writing, drawing, or manipulating objects. By replacing these lesson components with simulations and models—which are primarily audiovisual—it denies the other senses the value of a

	complete experience and eliminates the effort required to carry out the tasks involved in the educational process. Consequently, the child's complex development—encompassing both cognitive and affective-motivational faculties—is thwarted. Under the guise of facilitating access to ideas, the student's engagement is actually diverted toward a superficial approach that lacks any tangible connection to the aspect of reality being explored in the lesson.
Question No. 3: How do you perceive your interaction with students when using technology? And when conducting traditional lessons?	
Answer: My students are largely passionate about technology, and using technology in teaching activities is the norm, as virtual laboratories are essential for the study of electronics. Traditional lessons belong to the past—an approach that neither I nor my students have identified with for a long time, as it brings monotony and boredom to the classroom.	Answer: Thus, technology emerges as an intermediary in the teacher-student relationship, taking over a significant portion of the teacher's instructional functions and leading to a conflict of interests between the two parties. Digitalization bears the imprint of software developers, with the inadvertent intrusion of their mindset acting as a disruptive force within the teaching process. I believe the quality of the teacher-student relationship is best preserved through direct contact between the two, free from external mediation—however well-intentioned that mediation might be.
Question No. 4: What do you do when you want to present materials in digital format but encounter technical problems in the classroom?	
Answer No. 4: Technical issues are not an obstacle, because solutions can always be found. -Have you never encountered problems that prevented you from continuing the lesson? -There were problems, as I said, but I managed to overcome them. Together with my students.	Response No. 4: Technical issues are frequently cited in educational settings across the globe. This is because they are critical, potentially leading to the total disruption of a class—which typically lasts between 50 and 100 minutes. Resolving such issues often takes enough time to significantly disrupt the lesson, necessitating a return to traditional, non-technical—yet effective—teaching and learning methods. Technical issues often require the intervention of an IT specialist—meaning a second person must be present in the classroom—thereby undermining the

	environment conducive to teaching and learning.
Question No. 5: When did you first use technology in the classroom? And in your personal life?	
Answer: In my early teaching career, I used traditional methods, but students and the times changed along the way; I hardly even noticed when I shifted my teaching approach. In my personal life, I have always used technology—being passionate about tech—and have tried to keep up with the latest upgrades.	Answer: I have used technology in the classroom for over 15 years, a period during which its serious limitations have become apparent. The disadvantages of its use far outweigh the advantages; a rational approach is to use IT equipment in the classroom with caution. At home, I have been using IT technology for more than 20 years—ever since it became commercially available.
Question No. 6: When do you consider classroom results to be high-performing, whether using technology or traditional testing?	
Answer: Traditional testing is no longer part of my classroom practices; I believe that by using digital tools, I can better identify the strengths and weaknesses of a lesson and provide remedial instruction on specific concepts where necessary.	Answer: I assess classroom performance using traditional methods, as this evaluation involves a complex set of parameters closely linked to the dynamics of the student's learning progress and personal development. These factors depend on the complexity of the student's psyche and the nature of their relationship with the teacher, encompassing not only the acquisition of concepts but also values, language skills, and responsible interaction within the social environment of the class group. Technology cannot capture these markers of individual student progress, given their sheer number, the complexity of the overall picture they form, and the temporal nature of their unfolding. Technology introduces a reductionist, mechanical approach that is detrimental to the educational process.
Question No. 7: Do you think you should improve your use of technology in the classroom? (If the answer is YES, please explain.)	
Answer: Yes. Professional development is a necessity for a teacher, because everything related to technology changes at a dizzying pace, and modifications occur very frequently.	Answer: No.
Question No. 8: What digital skills could you develop?	
Answer: Lately, I have been fascinated by artificial intelligence, and I believe I need	Answer: Digital skills already imply a certain degree of IT specialization. The

further professional development in this field.	mere use of IT should not require special skills—much like any other piece of technical equipment found in everyday life. Had I wanted IT skills, I would have chosen a profession in that field. Requiring IT skills in education leads to a narrow, discriminatory selection of teachers based on criteria that serve the interests of IT manufacturers rather than the goals of quality education. Many highly capable teachers receive negative evaluations based on criteria unrelated to the actual process of teaching.
Question No. 9: Do you primarily use digital materials in your teaching? Please explain.	
Answer: The guided instruction of learning and the acquisition of technical competencies target aptitudes, competencies, and skills, which entails laboratory work involving clear steps to follow and results to determine.	Answer: I try to avoid using IT in my teaching, as it is overly complex relative to the benefits, time-consuming, and ill-suited to the specific nature of the teaching process. In my view, therefore, it is useless—if not actually detrimental.
Question No. 10: What changes do you consider useful regarding student assessment from a digital perspective?	
Answer: In my opinion, I would digitize as much as possible—perhaps even the baccalaureate exam in its entirety.	Answer: As long as I consider the use of information technology in the teaching process—particularly in a field as sensitive and complex as educational assessment—to be inappropriate, it is logical to conclude that the only suitable change is the elimination of digital technology from the assessment process; this is due to technology's limited capacity to capture the phenomenon in all its complexity, as well as the major disruptions it causes within the educational context in question.
Question No. 11: What changes do you consider useful regarding teacher evaluation from a digital perspective?	
Answer: Change is up to each individual and depends on many factors, but I consider motivation to be the most important one.	Answer: Teachers evaluation from a digital perspective is a pernicious undertaking, as it incorporates criteria alien to the nature of the profession; this tends to rank teachers based on the interests of Big Tech rather than the goals of a high-performing education system that fosters national development. The indiscriminate use and forced implementation of IT in schools—persisted with despite serious warnings from

	the medical research community, which are grounded in extensive case studies and irrefutable scientific findings—suggest the rather unflattering conclusion that this aggressive push to introduce IT into schools, lacking any unbiased debate, is in fact the result of a relentless marketing campaign by Big Tech representatives seeking substantial profits.
Question No. 12: How many years of teaching experience do you have?	
Answer: 20 years.	Answer: 21 years.
Question No. 13: How does the academic environment in which you work influence you regarding the use of technology?	
Answer: The influence is a positive one, as we have open resources just a click away that offer significant benefits if used sensibly.	Answer: From a technological perspective, the academic environment does not influence me at all, because technology is merely a complementary tool—sometimes highly useful, other times detrimental when deemed more important than the human factor. Technology must be understood as a working tool with its own limitations and areas of application—whether favorable or less suitable—rather than as a panacea.

Source: own contribution

Table No. 2: Questions/answers from interviewed students

Subject 1	Subject 2
Question 1: How often do you use technology in the classroom?	
Answer: I use technology in the classroom almost every day. Most teachers use PowerPoint presentations, educational videos, and online platforms to facilitate learning. We also frequently use laptops to access supplementary materials, search for information online, and complete interactive exercises. Furthermore, some classes use educational management platforms, such as Google Classroom, to distribute assignments and study materials, making the learning process more efficient and accessible. I think it's great!	Answer: I use technology quite often in class, as more and more teachers bring in supplementary materials designed to capture our attention and make learning easier. I find it convenient and useful—plus, we got used to using the platforms during the pandemic.
Question No. 2: How often do you use technology in your personal life?	
Answer: I use technology every day in my personal life. From the moment I wake up...	Answer: In my personal life, I use technology constantly, as it is my main

I start the day by checking notifications on my phone, then I use my laptop to do homework and access online educational resources. Yeah. In my free time, I use technology for entertainment—things like watching movies and series on streaming platforms, playing video games, and browsing social media. I also use my phone to communicate with friends and family via messages and video calls. It’s super cool! I never thought I’d become so attached to my phone, for instance. That’s exactly why I told my parents to get me a high-performance one... - So, did you convince them? - Yeah. They made me work for it... I look after an orchard; I’ve got all kinds of trees. I dig around them, whitewash the trunks, and prune them. It was worth it for the awesome phone I got! My folks tell me nothing comes for free, so I have to work until I have my own money!	source of inspiration and relaxation. It’s like... well, it’s simply part of my life. That’s how I have fun and communicate with my parents and colleagues; it’s very important to be able to talk to everyone as if they were right there with you. I watch movies on my phone, so yes, I probably use technology—phones, computers, TVs—to excess.
Question No. 3: What appeals to you—or doesn't—about lessons that use technology?	
Answer: What appeals to me about classes that use technology is the interactivity and quick access to information. Dynamic presentations, educational videos, and interactive apps make lessons more engaging and easier to understand. On the other hand, what I don't like is the over-reliance on technology, which can lead to distractions and technical issues that disrupt the flow of the lesson. Sometimes the equipment doesn't work properly or there are internet connection problems, which can be frustrating. - Has that happened to you often in class? - Yes, unfortunately. The internet connection is weak... or "lousy," as my classmates say... haha.	Answer: Personally, I’m drawn to classes that incorporate technology because the lessons are more interactive and fun—you basically learn without the stress. It’s like a game, or a movie where you’re the character. It’s great... I’d use it all the time; otherwise, I get bored.
Question No. 4: Do you prefer reading books in print or digital format? Explain your answer. (An answer of "I don't read" is not eligible.)	
Answer: What is the print format? - Paper format. - Okay! I prefer reading books in print because it offers a more authentic	Answer: I prefer reading printed books because I’m still drawn to the scent of a book; I experience the characters' emotions differently and feel like I can be part of the

experience. I like feeling the pages and smelling the paper; it helps me concentrate better and enjoy the reading process. Also, reading print books reduces screen time, which is good for eye health. However, I also appreciate the digital format for its portability and accessibility—especially when traveling or when I don't have access to a physical library. So, either way, it's great!	story. If I don't have time to go to the library and don't have the book I need for school at home—well, what can I do? I look for a digital version, call a friend... I manage somehow. But I don't particularly enjoy it. That's just how it is; I think my grandmother influenced me—she used to bring me books, and that's where that sense of nostalgia comes from.
Question No. 5: How much time (minutes/hours) do you spend per day using any device? Give examples.	
Answer: I spend an average of 6–7 hours a day using various devices. In the morning, I spend about 30 minutes checking notifications on my phone. In the afternoon, I use my phone and computer for entertainment and communication for another 4–5 hours, including playing video games, watching movies, and engaging in other constructive activities. On weekends, this time may increase, as I have more free time for recreational activities.	Answer: I can't give an exact time, but it's around six hours; most of the study materials are on my computer or phone, though I also spend time watching TV when I want to relax with a series or a movie. It might be a lot, or maybe not—the thing is, I don't even notice the hours flying by; I'm either focused on what I need to do, or my friends are sharing jokes from TikTok or other silly stuff like that.
Question No. 6: Do you consider technology useful in your personal life? Explain why.	
Answer: Yes, I consider technology extremely useful in my personal life. It gives me access to a vast amount of information and educational resources that help with my studies. Technology makes it easy to communicate with friends and family, even when I'm far away. For instance, I've just returned from Portugal—I was there for an Erasmus project. I stayed in touch with my family and friends via WhatsApp... - You're a very engaged student with a talent for writing, anyway. How do the two go together? - It works out fine! I write directly on my laptop. It also offers plenty of options for entertainment and relaxation, like games, movies, and music. Plus, technology helps me better organize my time and activities through calendar and note-taking apps.	Answer: Yes, I consider it useful in many ways. First of all, you can monitor your health much more easily with the help of a device, and secondly, phones allow us to communicate with loved ones who are far away—which is a real benefit. My boyfriend lives 300 km away, so it's hard for us to see each other—especially now with the Baccalaureate, exams, and everything else going on; if it weren't for the phone, it would really suck!
Question No. 7: What would you change in your life regarding your phone usage?	
Answer: I would try to cut down on the time	Answer: I'd like to change the way I use

I spend on my phone—especially on social media—and use it more productively. I’d like to spend more time reading, doing outdoor activities, or pursuing a hobby. I would also set strict limits on phone usage in the evening to improve my sleep quality. I’d use the phone more for educational activities, like online courses and learning apps, rather than for passive entertainment. Absolutely! —You’re very serious in your answers; you rarely speak in the Oltenian dialect... — Well, you’re the one who taught me (laughs).	social media; sometimes I overdo it and don’t realize how the time flies. Plus, I have a lot of allergies and am on medication... the last thing I need is a headache or a sore throat. My mom is always telling me to put the phone down, but it’s like talking to a brick wall! I’m hooked—that’s just how it is—and I can’t even imagine life without the phone, or everything else in the house. It’s much easier this way; in fact, I can’t picture life any other way.
Question No. 8: Which type of assessment do you prefer: traditional or digital? Explain your choice.	
Answer: I would prefer digital assessment because it is faster and more efficient. Digital assessments provide instant feedback, allowing me to understand immediately where I went wrong and what I need to improve. Also, online tests can be more varied and interactive, featuring multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and even educational games. Furthermore, digital assessments reduce paper consumption and are more environmentally friendly. However, I also appreciate traditional assessment for the seriousness and focus it requires. - And how will we handle the Romanian language subject? Will it all be multiple-choice? - No, that really doesn't work for Romanian! It’s not suitable. For that, you need a pen in hand—you have to write, to create. - You just told me that you write directly on your laptop. Which is it? - It’s one thing at home; in class, it’s a matter of time constraints—or rather, writing against the clock; I’m always racing against time. But school—and your class specifically—is a different story.	Answer: I see digital assessment as an advantage because I get my test results in real-time, which saves me from the anxiety associated with traditional testing. There’s also the issue of some teachers forgetting about assignments—now they have to return them sooner—or even losing them entirely; that has happened before. Nothing gets lost on a phone or computer; even if you delete something, you can find it in the Recycle Bin. For the career path I’m aiming for, technology will assist with assessment; pen and paper simply aren't necessary.
Question No. 9: Is there any type of technology in your room? Give examples.	
Yes, I have several electronic devices in my room. I have a computer that I use for	Answer: Yes, we have all kinds of technology—from phones, TVs, computers,

studying and entertainment, and a mobile phone for communication and internet access. I also have a video game console. These devices give me access to educational and recreational resources, as well as ways to communicate with friends and family. -How do you manage to get enough rest? Don't you feel tired in the morning? -It depends. Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't. I suppose I hadn't really noticed. Actually, I hadn't thought about that aspect until now.	and Google Home to smart light bulbs; technology plays a huge role in my family because it makes our lives easier. Especially Google Home and smart bulbs. We're tech-savvy down to our electric toothbrushes. This is likely the present, and the future won't be any different—or rather, what am I saying? It will certainly be dominated by technology to the greatest possible extent... in every way, shape, or form—you know what I mean, right? It couldn't be any other way. In fact, it feels strange when I go somewhere, like the countryside, and don't have internet access. It's a disaster for me.
Question No. 10: Do you consider the use of technology to be positive or negative? Explain your answer.	
Answer: I believe that the use of technology has a largely positive impact, provided it is used responsibly. Technology improves access to information and education, facilitating learning and personal development. It also enhances communication and connectivity, allowing us to maintain relationships with people around the world. On the other hand, excessive or improper use can lead to addiction, health issues, and distraction from important activities.	Answer: In my opinion, the use of technology is positive because it makes my work easier and sometimes saves me time or lightens the workload. Everything is easier.
Question No. 11: How old are you?	
Answer: I am 17 years old	Answer: I am 19 years old
Question 12: At what age did you start using any device? For what purpose?	
Answer: I started using technological devices when I was 7 or 8 years old. Initially, I used a computer to play educational games and visit websites for children. As I grew older, I began using technology for studying and school projects, and later for communication and entertainment. Nowadays, technological devices play a central role in my life, serving both educational and recreational purposes. -If you had a child, would you let them use a phone starting at age 7? -I haven't really thought about it. For us, it was something new; we took pride in	Answer: The first device I used was in the fourth grade, when I got a phone solely to communicate with my parents, though I had access to the television when I was younger.

playing outdoors. I'll give it some thought—I'd probably let them use it, but I wouldn't let them use it too much.

Source: own contribution

Table No. 2, questions/answers – interviewed auxiliary staff

Question No. 1: Do you consider the use of technology in the workplace useful? Please explain.	
A: I consider the use of technology in the workplace very useful, as it enables the performance of daily tasks within my department.	RYes. I find the technology useful because I can work on the situations and transmit them more easily and quickly.
Question No. 2: How often do you use technology at work? Please provide examples.	
RI use technology daily in my work—for drafting periodic and daily safety briefing forms, managing care staff work records, handling payroll applications and banking transactions, processing student allowance applications, and so on.	R: I use technology every day at work—the computer, phone, scanner, and printer. I couldn't even do my job without it. The days of pen and paper and drawing lines by hand are over. The future belongs to the computer—or whatever comes next.
Question No. 3: What problems have you encountered over time while using technology?	
R: The biggest issue was the lack of internet access at certain times, which hindered my work—or rather, brought it to a halt—and there are likely other things I don't know yet; I simply don't have the information.	R: encountered many problems due to power outages or internet failures. If I hadn't saved the document I was working on, I had to start all over again.
Question 4: Do you consider yourself well-prepared to use technology in the workplace? Please explain.	
R: don't feel sufficiently prepared for the job, because I haven't taken all the relevant courses for my role. But there is still time.	RI don't consider myself well-versed in using technology; I think I should take some more courses, at least on using the computer.
Question No. 5: What skills do you think you need to improve in order to perform well at work? Please explain.	
R: Enhanced digital skills—perhaps in written or verbal communication as well. I have no idea about any others.	R: I think I should improve my foreign language and PC skills; nowadays, it is essential to be able to speak and write in at least one foreign language. It is a must.
Question No. 6: Do you consider it possible that technology could supplement or replace you in the workplace?	
I don't think technology can replace me, because only I can do certain things—technology can't. For instance, when the power goes out, technology decides that all the students must leave the classroom, whereas I find other solutions—I pull the	I don't think technology can replace me, because it cannot connect with people—with the students or the parents. It does its job up to a certain point; for instance, I might type up a diploma or a request on the PC, but the computer doesn't hand it to the

drapes or curtains, and so on. I do NOT believe it can replace me; there will always be <i>things</i> that only humans can do.	student, nor does it add or correct errors without my command. I am the one in control; it doesn't control me.
Question No. 7: What other skills do you possess?	
R: I don't know, maybe something technical—I'm a skilled tradesman, a fisherman, etc..	R: I believe I possess communication skills and an openness to working with others—parents, students, and teaching staff.
Question No. 8: What improvements would you make to the workplace from a technology perspective?	
RWell, that's the idea: all the staff need to be connected so I can relay information to them. There shouldn't be a need for face-to-face interaction; instead, they should receive tasks quickly and be able to carry them out quickly.	R: I consider that I have everything I need at work; I wouldn't make any technological improvements.
Question No. 9: When did you use a photocopier for the first time? And a fax machine?	
: I used it for the first time in 2010; I didn't find it difficult to use because I read the instructions.	I used a photocopier for the first time in 1999, then the fax machine.
Question 10: What are the most frequently used means of communication in the workplace?	
R: Telephone, WhatsApp, and email	R: I use email and the phone the most.
Question No. 11: What courses have you taken regarding the use of technology in the workplace? Do you consider them useful? Please provide examples.	
R: ICT is very useful; it taught me how to use the computer, platforms, etc.	I have taken many IT courses; I find them useful because they've kept us up to date with new developments and how to use the technology. But there is still a need for them, as new things are constantly emerging; they help you do your job faster—and perhaps even better—than before.
Question No. 12: How much experience do you have as a secretary/accountant/financial administrator?	
R: 12 years of experience as a financial administrator	R: I've been a secretary for 11 years.

Source: own contribution

Interpretation of interview data from the six respondents

A comparison of the responses to the 13 questions **reveals** divergent opinions between the two interviewed teachers: the first—a teacher of computer science and technical subjects—views technology as absolutely essential, deeming it indispensable for conducting lessons and carrying out assessments, whereas the second respondent—a philosophy teacher—considers technology useless, or even detrimental, in the classes he teaches.

An analysis of the students' responses to the 12 questions **reveals** that they use technology and consider it useful for lessons, activities, and research projects, as well as for assessments across various subjects.

A comparison of the responses to the 12 questions **reveals** that the two representatives of the support staff—the secretary and the financial administrator—hold similar views: they consider technology useful but do not believe it could take over their jobs. Consequently, they maintain that the human element cannot be replaced by technology in the future, as the latter lacks the ability to empathize with the public—students, parents, teachers, local authorities, and so on.

Conclusions

Technology is an undeniable reality, and we can cite examples of its use in the classroom—such as for researching or completing assignments. The three groups involved (teachers, support staff, and students) hold similar or opposing views; this leads us to conclude that while some respondents have identified and justified errors in technology usage, others are rediscovering its consistent utility.

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