**Technology in the Classroom: What is Digital Literacy?**

By: [Jacqui Murray](http://www.teachhub.com/technology-classroom-what-digital-literacy)

“Digital literacy” is one of those [**technology in the classroom**](http://www.teachhub.com/technology-classroom-connected-teacher) buzzwords floated by experts as being granular to 21st century students. It's everywhere, on everyone's tongue, but figuring out what it means can be daunting. “Literacy” is simple: **The ability to read and write --** so “[digital literacy](https://www.graduateprogram.org/2019/10/what-is-digital-literacy-and-how-to-use-it-in-the-classroom/)” should be achieving those goals using **technology in the classroom.**

Philosophically, these are all good definitions, but after 15 years of teaching K-8 technology and grad school, I know “digital literacy” is much more complicated than a couple of sentences, especially when we're talking about students baptized in iPads and smartphones.

Here are the eight transformative technology in the classroom skills required of the digitally literate student:

## **Social Media**

The power of social media cannot be denied. Although its usage continues to be controversial in some circles, including education, its immediacy and reach are hard to beat as a communications tool. Most students are aware of the benefits of social media – now it’s your job to harness it by equipping students with the right knowledge to use it properly.

## **Cloud Computing**

Today's classwork means starting a report at school and finishing it at home. It requires switching seamlessly between the Chromebook in the classroom and the student's personal PC. It means sharing a report with team members without worrying that you don't have email addresses or they can't read the format you published in. [Cloud computing](https://edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2016/09/cloud-use-classroom-creates-more-learning-opportunities) makes all that happen. It's accessible from anywhere with Internet or WiFi, on any device, by whoever you give access. Whether that's one document a week or ten, people expect you to be that versatile.

# 5 strategies for developing digital literacy in a generation that takes tech for granted

**BY STEPHAN TURNIPSEED**

### **Student engagement and critical thinking will be key in developing digital literacy skills to take students from school to the workforce**

 

It’s commonplace to be impressed when we hear of excellent test scores and educational backgrounds from top institutes, no matter the type of degree or accolades. However, preparing our kids with test-taking strategies and admission into the best universities is not enough–and will be an extinct ideology with the changing demands of society and global economy.

We need to begin preparing the next generation of learners with appropriate tools and digital literacy to thrive in the Digital Age. So, what should we do to ensure our kids are not operating at a disadvantage?

1. **Stress the importance of coding and basic technology application skills**. In today’s world, the “mother tongue”—or, better said, the “lingua franca”–is found in coding and basic tech skills needed to communicate with the devices in the Internet of Things. Any child not equipped to speak this new language of coding will be lost, as if they were in a foreign culture with no cultural language skills.

[As soon as 2030 – a workforce currently in the first grade – there could be over 500 billion connected devices in the world](https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en/us/products/collateral/se/internet-of-things/at-a-glance-c45-731471.pdf), and coding will be the basic literacy. Through coding experiences, students build digital literacy and are able to develop abstract concepts like pattern-recognition, while other education tech solutions, like robotics, give students an opportunity to apply physical interpretations in a real way.

Students must begin using coding and robotics to learn to speak this new language and, as an essential tool creating brain pathways essential for developing abstraction skills, so that they can know how to take on simple and complicated problems.

1. **Encourage innovation by revising vs. reinventing the wheel**. We must push students towards innovation and understanding the operation and design of how devices work. Innovation does not occur serendipitously, but rather through the application of existing knowledge to new circumstances or needs.

# What is digital literacy and why does it matter?

# By: Brad Dehart

What does the term “digital literacy” mean to you?

Ask a few educator colleagues what digital literacy means to them. You’ll likely hear a myriad of answers that differ from your own.

Although the meaning of digital literacy can vary greatly by source, even to the point of confusion, digital literacy encompasses 21st-century skills related to the effective and appropriate use of technology.

To keep things simple, let’s narrow the field to one definition. [The American Library Association (ALA)](https://literacy.ala.org/digital-literacy/) defines digital literacy as “the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.”

With this ALA digital literacy definition as a guiding light, it’s important to understand that even digital natives who know how to send a text and post to social media are not considered “digitally literate” by any means.

Digital literacy in education encompasses so much more. For example, students must have specific skills when reading online text that may contain embedded resources such as hyperlinks, audio clips, graphs, or charts that require students to make choices.

Students today are also being asked to create, collaborate, and share digital content and to do so responsibly. For these reasons, principals, school librarians, and teachers understand the importance of digital literacy skills for students and teaching digital literacy in the classroom.

# What is digital literacy?

# By: Eric Lambert

Digital literacy means having the skills you need to live, learn, and work in a society where communication and access to information is increasingly through digital technologies like internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices.

Developing your [critical thinking skills](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1082382/Critical_Thinking.pdf) (opens in new window) (PDF, 128 kB) is essential when you're confronted with so much information in different formats – searching, sifting, evaluating, applying and producing information all require you to think critically.

**Communication**is also a key aspect of digital literacy. When communicating in virtual environments, the ability to clearly express your ideas, ask relevant questions, maintain respect, and build trust is just as important as when communicating in person.

You'll also need **practical skills**in using technology to access, manage, manipulate and create information in an ethical and sustainable way. It's a continual learning process because of constant new apps and updates, but your future self will thank you if you keep your digital life in order!

Digital literacy is really important now, while you're a university student. It'll also be really important in the future when you enter the **professional**world. In your workplace you'll be required to interact with people in digital environments, use information in appropriate ways, and create new ideas and products collaboratively. Above all, you'll need to maintain your digital identity and wellbeing as the digital landscape continues to change at a fast pace.

Here you can learn more about the six elements of digital capability as modelled by [Jisc](https://www.jisc.ac.uk/rd/projects/building-digital-capability%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) (opens in new window). The Jisc model below illustrates the idea that proficiency in ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is a core element, whilst other skills overlap and build on this capability, and overarching it all is our digital identity and wellbeing.