**Bridging the New Digital Divide: Explicitly Teaching Digital Literacies**

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**Digital literacy is necessary for student success.**

A definition of *digital literacy*:

The ability to use ICT [Information and Communication Technology] and the Internet becomes a new form of literacy – “digital literacy”. Digital literacy is fast becoming a prerequisite for creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship and **without it citizens can neither participate fully in society nor acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to live in the 21st century**.

Martin, A. (2005). DigEuLit – a European framework for digital literacy: A progress report**.** *Journal of eLiteracy**2*. 130-136.

**The current education pipeline does not adequately prepare digitally literate students.**

…there is now evidence consistent with anecdotal reports of students’ difficulty with ICT literacy despite their technical prowess. The results reflect **poor ICT literacy performance not only by students within one institution, but across the participating sixty-three high schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities**.

Katz, I. R. (2007, September). Testing information literacy in digital environments: ETS’s iSkills assessment. *Information Technology and Libraries*. 3-12.

**Students face a situation of ‘double jeopardy’ in preparing for college if their writing and digital skills are not simultaneously developed.**

**Digital practice is an invisible component of the writing challenges** **students face in order to graduate** (Goode, 2010). The data suggest students who are underprepared according to traditional writing criteria face additional barriers to academic success because of low computer skills.

Relles, S. R., & Tierney, W. G. (2013). Understanding the writing habits of tomorrow’s students: Technology and college readiness. *The Journal of Higher Education, 84*(4). 477-505.

**Marginalized populations, such as females, low-income students and students of color, are especially at risk for college readiness in the areas of written and digital literacies**

Goode, J. (2010). The digital identity divide: How technology knowledge impacts college students. *New Media & Society, 12*(3). 497-513.

**What English and Language Arts Teachers Can Do to Address the Digital Divide**

To address the new digital divide in your classroom, consider integrating digital literacies into your lesson planning by:

* Identifying which specific digital skills are required for your students to complete an assignment
* Avoiding an assumption that every one of your students has sufficient digital literacy to successfully complete the assignment
* Developing curriculum to explicitly teach digital literacies to compliment the content that you teach in your class
* Embedding digital skill assessment in your assignment rubrics
* Making affordances for students to peer tutor digital literacies

Use the following chart for some example pairings and curriculum resources. Then brainstorm some additional pairings that you can use in your class:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Writing skill** | **Digital skill** | **Helpful classroom resource links** |
| active voice sentence structure | grammar check for passive voice | <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/office2013/word2013> |
| use of supporting evidence | effective database searches  | <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/nybbexpress/curriculum/lockport/lpl_google.pdf> |
| imagery | embedding images with writing | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acPBrA3P5Ds> |
| peer editing | track changes and inserting comments | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ERREUBdEP4> |
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