Digital Literacy: An Essential Life Skill in the Present Era of Growing and Global Educational Society

Mohinder Singh*

Research Scholar, Department of Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh

Abstract – Digital literacy is the foremost necessity of the 21st-century world. Common people, nation builders, and the next generation of modern techno age are in the dire need of properly digitally literate. Digital literacy is the new life skill in this age. The digital environment is spreading out around the whole society. Well settled and comfortable life of all of us is possible only if we will be digitally literate to survive in this digital era. Most of the job opportunities are only for those who are digitally literate. In the modern system of education teacher must have digital skills. A teacher who is digitally literate can survive in the digital era. Technology will not replace the teachers, but teachers who use technology will replace those who do not. So to keep the issue in the mind researcher made an attempt to through light on digital literacy as a life skill in the present era of growing and global educational society. Some of the important issues that a teacher should learn and use the digital devices and create a digital environment in the classroom as well as in the school also are discussed here. Students definitely will be benefitted if teachers use digital devices and ICTs at their best. It is the time to enhance those skills which are the foundation for the present global and growing educational society. The researcher also discussed the positive and negative impacts of digital learning and the role of parents in the global educational society.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Life Skill, Digital Classroom, Digital Learning Global Educational Society.

- x -

INTRODUCTION

Information and technology are playing an indispensable role in our day to day life. ICT's have their influence in each and every sphere of human life. With the opportunities provided by information and communication technologies, the most important value of the 21st century is twenty-four hour and seven days access to information in the fastest way. With the advent of mobility, digital tools have become an indispensable part of our lives and also enhanced three meaningful factors such as speed, virtuality, and networking (Rivoltella, 2008). According to a report published by the International Society for Technology in Education (2007), there are 7 billion mobile customers throughout the world; 27% of these users benefit from 3G/4G mobile services. The latest numbers which were announced in 2013 by Apple show that 50 billion applications have been downloaded in the last 5 years. Many people access to information they need via websites such as Google, YouTube, and Wikipedia. E-mail is the most popular tool among people preferred for sending and receiving messages quickly. Online banking and shopping are spreading among people from day to day, social networks like Facebook and Twitter are encouraging people to cooperate by setting the content of the communication and sharing it. As it is usually observed, no matter how old people are, using digital technologies in the digital era has become a vital need (Goodfellow, 2011). New technologies are enabling more job tasks to be automated. While some jobs could become obsolete as a result, it is expected that others will be created and that many more will change to include a greater degree of interaction with digital technologies. It is expected that a basic level of digital skill will be crucial for the vast majority of the labour force and that demand for higher levels of digital skill will increase (Berger & Frey, 2016). In an evolving digital economy—the new economic paradigm marked by increasing reliance on digital technologies—digital literacy has been identified as an economic necessity (Rouse, 2016).

Individuals using digital tools in the information age have turned into participative and active individuals who gather, process and produce information (Sharkey & Brandt, 2008). A digitally literate person uses technology effectively in order to do research,

*Corresponding Author (email:sahil121983@gmail.com)

reach information sources, read-write and comment efficiently, make reasonable choices, and make right decisions. Digital literacy encourages curiosity and creativity and also enables the individual to evaluate the information that has been gathered in a critical way. By increasing the ability to use digital resources, digital literacy helps individuals feel relatively secure at technology usage (McLoughlin, 2011). However, today still many people are in need of training so that they can use and manage the multiple and loose information network with the help of technology (FutureLab, 2010). Government is taking the initiative to provide digital facilities and sources which are helpful to survive in this digital era.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital literacy is described as creating social mores within individuals' private lives and the ability to reflect on this process using digital tools appropriately. Further, digital literacy involves identifying digital resources and content, reaching, managing, combining, evaluating and making analysis/synthesis, forming new data, creating new ways of media expressions and making it possible to communicate with others (Martin, 2008). Digital literacy skills relating to the use of digital technology tools in activities that locate, create, communicate, and evaluate information within a networked environment, mediated by digital computing technologies (Boileau, 2014).

Digital technologies which people use and are influenced by are multiple, rich, and complex. Digital literacy is related to learners' abilities to find and choose reliable as well as relevant information within complex networks (Gilster, 1997). Digital literacy has been taken up within fields informed by social and cultural theories to focus on digital literacies (in the plural) as a set of sociocultural practices, and not a checklist of proficiencies or competencies (Knobel & Lankshear, 2017). A digitally literate person knows the most effective and well-organised ways to search the information he/she needs. That is why; he/she has a good grasp of ways of searching for information. A digitally literate person knows how to select and use the digital technologies where, when, and in a purposeful way. Digital literacy is also related to critical thinking about the opportunities and benefits of digital technologies used frequently such as Web 2.0, social networks, and mobile applications (McLoughlin, 2011).

Digital literacy incorporates more than possessing the knowledge, skills and abilities to use a computer and access the Internet. It also involves an understanding of available components such as hardware, software, the Internet, cell phones, PDAs, digital devices and Web 2.0 tools. A person using these skills to interact with society may be called a digital citizen. Literacy in the digital age means that we are informed and logical decision makers. Literacy means that we comprehend and analyze the various multimedia

sources and, in the context of our own lives, make rational decisions.

DIGITAL LITERACY AS A LIFE SKILL

Our Prime Minister is planning the new courses and forming policies on Skill India. To live a prosperous life one must be skilled. To be skilled is the need of the hour. Life Skills can be defined as the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Adaptive means that a person is flexible in approach and is able to adjust in different circumstances. Positive behaviour implies that a person is forward-looking, and even in difficult situations can identify a ray of hope and opportunities to find solutions. Life Skills are the abilities that help in the promotion of mental and social well-being, and competence in young children to face the realities of life. Digital literacy is the life skill in the present scenario. It is playing a vital role in all walks of one's life. It is the demand of the society. A digitally literate person can make pace with the changing need of the society. Digital literacy is the key to live a skilful life. To engage in everyday activities as banking, study, search information, job opportunities, employment, education, search new lifestyle, transport facilities, weather forecasting, even to seek minute information one should be digitally literate. In the classroom if the teacher is well versed with his subject but not digitally literate he/she cannot deliver his/her knowledge effectively in front of digitally literate students. It is not an option to be digitally literate but it is the demand of the global educational society to be digitally literate. One who is digitally literate can raise his standard of life also.

The populations where digital literacy is most important are ICT users, e-business professionals, and ICT professionals. A well-educated person is not educated if he is not well versed with new digital technology. In the present digital age, digital literacy can be considered a life skill which is not optional but the necessity of the changing need of this digital age.

► ICT user skills are those that should be learnt by all citizens of the knowledge society in order to:

• select and apply ICT systems and devices in a systematic and well-organized way;

• utilise common generic software tools in their private lives;

• use specialised tools for work;

• easily adapt to changes in infrastructure and applications.

► e-business skills are the capabilities needed to exploit the business opportunities provided

by Internet-based applications. These skills are used, among others:

• to rationalise management;

• to promote more efficient and effective performance of organisations;

• to explore new ways of conducting established businesses;

• to establish new businesses.

► ICT professionals' skills require high-level, specialized knowledge used for:

• researching, developing, and designing ICT tools;

• managing, producing, marketing, and selling tools and services;

• consulting, integrating, and installing ICT supported applications;

• maintaining, administrating, supporting, and servicing ICT systems.

Principles of Digital Literacy

Digital Literacy is about being able to make sense of digital media. This occurs through meaningful and sustainable consumption and curation patterns that improve an individual's potential to contribute to an authentic community. Digital literacy is a skill which is the playing a vital role in the life of every person. This includes the ability to analyze, prioritize, and act upon the countless digital media 21st-century citizens encounter on a daily basis.

1.   Comprehension

Comprehension is the ability to understand the things as a whole. The first principle of digital literacy is to extract, implicit and explicit ideas from a media.

2.   Interdependence

The second principle of digital literacy is interdependence–how one media form connects with another, whether potentially, metaphorically, ideally, or literally. Little media is created with the purpose of isolation, and publishing is easier than ever before. Media forms co-exist and supplement to each other, due to the surpassing profusion of media.

3.   Social Factors

Sharing is no longer just a method of personal identity or distribution, but rather can create messages of its own. Who shares what to who through what channels can not only determine the long-term success of the media, but can create organic ecosystems of sourcing, sharing, storing, and ultimately repackaging media.

4.   Curation

A popular type of digital communication is the act of curating The capacity to curate at a sophisticated level, both in terms of content and visual appeal, is quickly becoming a necessity for educators who engage in online teaching and learning (Thompson, 2015). Curation in a digital sense is a bunch of activities and processes done to create, manage, maintain, and validate a digital content. Speaking of storing, overt storage of favoured content through platforms such as Pinterest, pearltrees, pocket and others is one method of "save to read later." But more subtly, when a video is collected in a YouTube channel, a poem ends up in a blog post, or an infographic is pinned to Pinterest or stored on a learning board, that is also a kind of literacy as well– the ability to understand the value of information, and keep it in a way that makes it accessible and useful long-term.

DIGITAL LITERACY FOR TEACHERS

Teacher as a learner in the new digital environment: A teacher must create the opportunities for himself and for students and that digital literacy brings. It is the process of learning and sharing– so the teacher should learn and then share his/her learning with his/ her students. For the application of this way of teaching in the classroom, teachers need an institution that supports and enables them to teach in this way.

New technology as a new challenge: Teachers don't be intimidated. They don't stick to techniques and technologies in your comfort zone. Some teachers might find making a podcast, for example, a challenge too far. In reality, most digital techniques are relatively straightforward, and most are supported by a host of 'how to' guides on YouTube and elsewhere.

Teachers should see new frontiers in digital literacy as a challenge worth tackling – not just for the classroom, but for their own professional and academic development.

Techno-savvy: Nothing's worse than trying to use digital techniques and being let down by the technology. Students are likely to see the funny side, but teachers don't want to feel the joke is ever on them. Of course, there are basic steps to take for a teacher, such as always ensuring his kit is working in advance, that he is familiar with it and have his alternatives up the sleeve. But why stop there? Why rely on IT to solve problems? A teacher might find becoming more technically capable and informed a worthwhile life skill outside the classroom in any

*Corresponding Author (email:sahil121983@gmail.com)

case, so consider taking an IT troubleshooting course, reading literature or practising in spare time.

Let students find out: When a teacher has the technical know-how, it can be tempting to intervene with students to ensure a high-quality end product. Even if he knows something can be done better, let students find out for themselves. This way they will learn in two senses: the content of the lesson, and the digital technique required.

Don't only teach digital skills in digital lessons: In a similar way, think how digital and IT skills can extend across the curriculum and teacher/student relationship. Just as students practice writing both in specific language lessons and in all school subjects, couldn't they practice digital literacy skills in every area, and every interaction you have with them – even if it's as simple as a digital register?

Don't only use digital literacy to teach: Why not share information with parents using digital techniques? How about setting up digital exchanges amongst staff at your institution? Why not take the techniques and ideas you now know into other walks of your life, whether social, personal creativity or more? So a techno-savvy can use the technology in his/her daily life also.

DIGITAL LITERACY FOR STUDENTS

Nowadays, educators must also be cognizant of promoting digital literacy, putting the proper utilization of digital tools and technology right on par with reading and writing. In digital literacy, students need to be talented and familiar with the system they might use. Students can develop their skill by going to the class of ICT of perhaps learning by themselves. As in the real life, kids also having they own Smartphone or tablet. But, many people didn't aware actually that is also the starting point which the skill can be developed. Other than that, communication skill and searching skill also can be improved. By having those skills, students can improve their self and can easily bring forward their self to the organization (Baharuddin, 2016)

Higher-order thinking skills: Whether a teacher's state is transitioning to the common core state standards or revamping its own independent state standards set, the key movement is to steer instruction away from memorization and, instead, promote the acquisition of higher-order skills (analysis, cooperation, creating, etc.). Digital literacy skills are transmutable from the tech world to the real world and meet many of the basic needs required by today's learning standards. Instilling strong levels of digital literacy creates great avenues to learn and practice these higher-order skills, ranging from students working collectively via a Google Doc to developing the ability to analyze web sources credibility (and everything in between).

Breaks down the walls of learning and information

The traditional pen-and-pencil system presents tons of barriers to student access and connection, whether it is the plight of a master narrative, language disconnect, etc. By instilling adept digital skills, students can break through these walls and become producers of knowledge. Allowing students to find their own learning resources (via the web, cloud-based learning tools, etc.) and analyze the sources benefit creates a truly personalized learning environment. Students are no longer given a static text set that dictates how and what they should learn. Students will build their media literacies, including skills in communicating using digital systems relevant to their disciplines. We will facilitate the development of student capabilities to navigate a complex information landscape, question the authenticity and reliability of unfiltered information, engage with scholarly publications and assume greater control over their learning (University of South Australia, 2015). Instead, developed digital literacy skills afford students the ability to seek out and utilize knowledge resources that help them create a personal learning connection.

Prepares students for a digital post-K-12 world

Not to be lost in all of the higher-order thinking and personalized learning benefits is the fact that the workplace is becoming increasingly digitized. Much of our goals as educators are geared around ensuring students have the tools they need to become successful post-K-12 citizens. That now includes having familiarity with technology. Whether it be working with Microsoft Office, understanding the nuances of a Windows/Mac operating system, or even the simple use of a mouse and keyboard, it's vital for students to be ready to roll when sat down in front of a digital device. In today's climate, gaining familiarity with digital device functions and features is now just as important as learning to read and write.

DIGITAL LITERACY AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In this digital era technology is playing a crucial role in our changing educational system. Students are taking information from online social media websites, YouTube and other online sources. We can take information and learn many skills with the help of technology. Students, as well as teachers and people, can learn various skills through online websites. One can learn dancing skills, swimming skills, speaking skills, hobby classes, and music classes. One can learn a foreign language through online courses. There are many online apps which are helpful to improve our general knowledge, current affairs and prepare us for the future competition. In the age of internet, one is able to use it at any time

Mohinder Singh*

and learn each and every skill which is useful in his /her daily life.

IMPACTS OF DIGITAL LEARNING

Technology has aided the human society with various advancements and conveniences. It made our life easy and smooth. It brings the revolution in the classrooms and in the growing educational society. But technology can have a large impact on users' mental and physical health. Being addicted to technology can cause psychological issues such as distraction, narcissism, the expectation of instant gratification, and even depression. Besides affecting users' mental health, the use of technology can also have negative repercussions on physical health causing vision problems, hearing loss, and neck strain. Even long sitting causes various physical diseases etc. In this way, digital learning has its own pros and cons.

Positive impacts of Digital Learning

Suitable Learning style: Digital learning helps a student to learn in a style that best suits him. For example, if he is unable to understand through theory, he can use interactive programs to get a better understanding of the concept.

Freedom to learn anytime: With the help of the internet and the modern technology, students can now access study material on their laptops at any time and from anywhere. As a result, now students are free to learn in the school and outside the school.

Boosting achievement: Researches has shown that students who have access to digital learning and who make good use of it, tend to perform well in their exams.

Helpful for slow learners: Students who are slow learner can learn at their own pace. They can repeat the study material again and again till required.

Improving concepts: Blended learning tools are very helpful in making the concept understandable. Students are better able to comprehend problems.

Enhancing creativity: Not all students are able to perform well by solely relying on course books. For them, it is important to utilize their creative side. For this matter, digital learning is the best option.

Increased engagement: It is true that interactive programs and strategies are engaging for students. They are able to develop an interest in them, helping them to learn voluntarily and more selectively.

Negative impacts of Digital Learning

A distraction: Digital learning can become a bit of a distraction at times. Sometimes, the student begins to spend more time on it than he should. At times, he completely loses interest in his course books and classroom lecture. This way, he is bound to miss out on the important stuff.

An expensive idea: Not everyone can afford to buy electronics for studying. Laptops, smartphones, etc. are quite expensive and therefore cannot be afforded by everyone.

Missing out on the real stuff: Lack of face-to-face interactions with the teachers and classmates is not a healthy move. It is important to remember that not all education can be received through digital learning. Class lectures and discussions are important learning processes. The bond of a teacher and pupil is very important for a positive learning experience. As seen above, digital learning has two sides to it: pros and cons. It can be concluded that it is essential that traditional teaching methods are carried out hand in hand with digital learning. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance that during digital learning, the student does not get distracted to other sites like game sites or social media sites; otherwise, the student will be unable to focus on his studies.

PARENTING IN DIGITAL AGE

It has gone the days when a student has a teacher as the only source of knowledge. In the 21century students are much informed than their teachers and parents. In today's growing, global educational society, culture and economy, in which individuals have access to information at their fingertips at all times. So in this scenario, it is most important that parents must have the knowledge of digital devices, digital rules, digital citizenship digital media and digital learning. Parents should be digitally literate so that they can watch their wards in their studies and keep an eye on their digital learning and web surfing. In this way, parents can help their children in their digital learning and motivate them. In these days most of the parents prepare projects and other school assignments of their wards with the help of internet. It is possible only if they are digitally literate.

CONCLUSION

Digital Literacy is a life skill in the present era of growing and global educational society. Digital literacy is playing a vital role in our life. In the digital age, there are types of literacy which are essential to living in the present society. It is a need of the time to be digital literate to every person. Principles of digital literacy are very much helpful for the whole society. In such a world, youth need skills for working within social networks, for pooling knowledge within a collective intelligence, for negotiating across cultural differences that shape the governing assumptions in different communities and for reconciling conflicting bits of data to form a coherent picture of the world around them. Teachers are the nation builders. In

www.ignited.in

Corresponding Author (email:sahil121983@gmail.com)

the present digital age only digitally literate teachers can teach the students in an effective and comprehensive way. Digital literacy already has a proverbial foot in the door in relation to teachers and students' interests and attention. In the growing and global educational society digital learning is a way of life. For a vast majority of digital natives, the idea of books and paper is old and boring. They have these awesome tablets, laptops, apps, etc. that put old-school media to shame. We can use digital devices in each and every sphere of our daily life. In this digital era technology is growing day by day. In digital environment, digital learning has positive as well as negative impacts. All it depends upon how to use the technology and role of parents in the global educational society. Parenting plays a pivotal role in the digital society. Parents must be digitally literate so that they can help their wards and keep an eye on their wards in this digital learning era.

REFERENCES

Baharuddin, M. F. (2016). Digital Literacy Awareness among Students. Research Hub. 2. 57.

Berger, T., and Frey, C. B. (2016). Structural Transformation in the OECD: Digitalization, deindustrialisation and the future of work. Retrieved from http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/structural-transformation-in-the-oecd_5jlr068802f7-en

Boileau, T. (2014, April 9). Digital curation and methods for teaching digital literacy skills. Retrieved from http://www.slideshare.net/timboileau/dc-ml-presentation

FutureLab. (2010). Digital literacy across the curriculum handbook. Retrieved on 22 January 2013 from http://www.futurelab.org.uk/sites/default/files/Digital_Literacy_handbook_0.pdf

Gilster, P. (1997). Digital literacy. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Goodfellow, R. (2011). Literacy, literacies, and the digital in higher education. Teaching in Higher Education, 16(1), pp. 131-144.

International Society for Technology in Education (2007) iste.nets.s: Advancing Digital Age Learning. Iste.org/nets.

Knobel, M. & Lankshear (2017). Digital literacies. In K. Peppler (Ed.), The SAGE encyclopedia of out-of-school learning. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Martin, A. (2008). "Digital Literacy and the "Digital Society" in *Digital Literacies: Concepts, Policies and Practices*: Lankshear C., Knobel, M. (Eds.) New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

McLoughlin, C. (2011). What ICT-related skills and capabilities should be considered central to the definition of digital literacy? In T. Bastiaens and M. Ebner (Eds.), Proceedings of World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications 2011 (pp. 471-475). Chesapeake, VA: AACE

Rivoltella, P.C. (2008). From media education to digital literacy: A paradigm change? In P.C. Rivoltella (Ed.), Digital literacy: Tools and methodologies for information society (pp. 217- 230). Hershey, PA: IGI Publishing.

Rouse, M. (2016). Definition: digital economy. Retrieved from http://searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/digital- economy.

Sharkey, J. & Brandt, D. S. (2008). Integrating technology literacy and information literacy. In P. C. Rivoltella (Ed.), Digital literacy: Tools and methodologies for information society (pp. 85-97). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Thompson, T. L. (2015). Digital doings: Curating work–learning practices and ecologies. Learning, Media and Technology, pp. 1–21.

University of South Australia. (2015). Digital learning strategy 2015–2020. Adelaide, South Australia, pp. 1-13. Retrieved from http://www.unisa.edu.au/PageFiles/170704/Digital%20Lear ning%20Strategy.pdf

Mohinder Singh*