

Digital Literacy Reconsidered

Digital inclusion and equity seek to assure individuals and communities are empowered to fully participate in society, democracy, and the economy to achieve those things which they value doing. If we are to achieve full digital inclusion and equity, we need to reconsider digital literacy, moving away from approaches that primarily emphasize technical skills development. Cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-emotional skills, combined with information seeking skills and a critical sociotechnical perspective assure emphasis on effective use of digital technologies to support goal-oriented behaviors.

Application Skills

The ability to harness our cognitive, metacognitive, socio-emotional, and information seeking capabilities to leverage resources, overcome forces of exclusion, and use just-in-time learning to acquire missing technical skills in order to achieve that which we value being and doing.

Cognitive Skills

The ability to think, study, and learn, as well as to logically analyze and organize problems in ways that allow use of tools to help solve them.

Metacognitive Skills

The awareness of what we know and what we need to know; the ability to control one's own cognition; the ability to generalize and use prior knowledge to plan and modify future learning and problem solving.

Socio-emotional Skills

The ability to communicate and collaborate with others, combined with the personal confidence, persistence, and tolerance needed to tackle complex, ambiguous, open-ended problems.

Information Seeking Skills

The ability to seek, evaluate, interpret and apply relevant and trustworthy information across multiple media.

Resources

Assets from which an individual can draw to advance their capabilities and those of their community. A resource portfolio is a multidimensional and intersecting set of assets, including: educational, social, psychological, natural, information, material, financial, geographic, cultural, and health resources.

Forces of Exclusion

The historical, structural, and systemic constructs within a society that create conditions whereby an individual's personal characteristics, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, etc. forcefully align to negatively affect that individual's resource portfolio.

Technical Skills

The knowledge and physical competencies needed to effectively select and use a specific tool in a specific way to achieve a defined action.

Critical Sociotechnical Perspective

Technology is more than just the hardware and software of which it is comprised. Rather, it is a seamless, indivisible combination of artifact, people, organizations, policies, economics, histories, cultures, and knowledge; it is a sociotechnical product. Further, sociotechnical products are not static, but are continuously innovated in use as individuals and groups regularly adapt artifacts to fit within changing social contexts. The unique combination of these factors leads to emergent properties of the sociotechnical product in ways that amplify human forces along the life cycle of that product. These forces may be actively or passively oppressive, or may actively or passively work to counter oppression.

