Addressing the Digital Natives Myth through Digital Literacy Course Design

Jenae Cohn, Ph.D. & Renée Hewitt
Stanford University & University of Kansas

ABSTRACT
Near-ubiquitous device usage on college campuses may suggest that digital literacy is mainstream, but device ownership does not equate to digital literacy development. The norms, applications, and protocols required to engage in digital research, reading, writing, and programming require explicit instruction. We propose that instructional designers take hands-on approaches to supporting instructors in implementing digital pedagogy. For example, we suggest that IDs incorporate content curation as a practice into course design, offer customized support documentation, build workshops, and develop digital annotation strategies. In so doing, IDs take on more visible roles in disseminating digital literacy.

BACKGROUND
- 95% own smartphones vs. 38% use smartphones for learning
- 91% own laptops vs. 48% use laptops for learning
- 25% ask for technology training from instructors

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. Which units on-campus should offer technology training/support for undergraduate students?
2. What should a digital literacy curriculum look like for undergraduate students?

WHAT IS DIGITAL LITERACY?
Doug Belshaw’s Essential Elements (2014)
1. Cultural
2. Cognitive
3. Constructive
4. Communicative
5. Confident
6. Creative
7. Critical
8. Civic

HOW COULD INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS APPLY THIS FRAMEWORK?
- Name digital skills essential to discipline/course context
- Develop learning experiences in discipline/industry-specific tools
- Develop workshops for instructors that explore the affordances and limitations of digital and analog solutions/projects.
- Write customized, student-facing documentation to help students understand how to communicate in online spaces effectively.
- Build informal communities of practice for instructors interested in engaging with digital pedagogy.
- Develop lists of possible assignment types for different disciplines that take creative approaches to learning.
- Collaborate with librarians to develop media literacy learning modules for specific courses.
- Name skills transfer to contexts outside academia.

WHERE COULD INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS APPLY THIS FRAMEWORK?
- Faculty Consultations
- Technical Documentation
- Library Collaborations
- Assignment Design
- Asynchronous Resource Lists

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS
- Create assessments of re-designed assignments.
- Build faculty surveys to assess efficacy of asynchronous resources/lists.
- Develop collaborations with a variety of campus constituencies interested in digital literacy frameworks.
- Survey instructional designers on perspectives towards/interests in facilitating digital literacy curriculum.

REFERENCES