Digital Literacy

From a young age, my parents were very adamant about teaching me how to use digital technology. Thus when I was around eight years old, we gained a computer for our living room. I remember vividly being allowed to go on it for an hour or so a day to play various reading and writing games that my mother had purchased at the store. It was fascinating, even to a child as young as I had been, all of the options that were available to me just with a few clicks at my fingertips, which, with time, would allow me to type and explore any topic imaginable, creating a world that I had all the access to. However, even with such a great advantage as technology through a digital literacy means posed, sometimes it can be overused and the previous print or non-digital methods forgotten. While it is important to understand the broad and vast uses that digital literacy offers, one must also remember other skills and have a mindset that is not solely reliant on such technology.

As noted in “From Pencils to Pixels,” Dennis Baron argues that “The computer, the latest development in writing technology, promises, or threatens, to change literacy practices for better or worse” which could be viewed in two various lights. Technology can be viewed as both positive and negative. For me, the computer allowed me a means of access to unlimited information that I was able to use for various projects and fields of study that I was interested in. Yet, even with this vast information, it was sometimes hard to
know which was the truth and which was not. When being given the opportunity to use a device such as a computer, one most remember old literacy practices.

In high school, I will admit that I sometimes turned to SparkNotes rather than take the time to read a piece of literature. In today’s age, it seems so much easier to quickly look up a tidbit of information we are looking for rather than delving into the subject further. We forgo the prior information and techniques we were taught by using books and instead turn to something much faster. But this is not always the best idea.

Baron elaborates further to explain that easily forget about the simple tools such as a pen or pencil in exchange for using the Internet. He explains that people forgo the usual (do you mean non-digital or print?) means for communicating in order to use the digital resources. In today’s society, many people have turned away from writing with such tools and have turned to using faster devices such as phones or computers. This has made it more productive for the academic field in the sense of paper writing and other means of publication, but we forget and sometimes grow impatient with the times we are required to use a pencil or pen. It is important to learn the balance of each. People cannot solely rely on one form of communication and forget the other. It is imperative that both are given an equal chance, as dependence on one over the other could lead to some issues down the road.

However, in the article, “Expanding the Concept of Literacy” Elizabeth Daley brings up many points including that “the multimedia language of the screen enables modes of thought, ways of communication,” to show the benefits behind the digital literacy culture (33). From my own experiences, through the means of digital literacy, I have befriended many people over the internet who live in other countries simply because we both share a fascination with digital literacy and are able to connect to each other through the benefits of the internet Facebook?
email? Twitter? Try to use more specific language. Of these friends, many have learned English through digital literacy and have expanded their knowledge that they might otherwise not have. Not only that, but digital literacy allows us to even read documents that were in one language, to read them in another. The internet provides us with a great array of knowledge and technology that we would otherwise not experience through objects such as books and other materials.

Another idea that can be realized from Daley’s thoughts is the aspect of creativity and ideas. As someone who uses digital literacy much in her everyday life, I have experienced that by using a computer instead of writing by hand, I can get my ideas out more quickly as well as come up with new ones while my fingers work for me. The vast array of media that is available to me and through me from a digital literacy perspective is extensive. However, it is still important for me to use other methods besides digital literacy. As is noted, digital literacy provides a quick access to creative ideas but can also easily diminish some creativity because of how fast it truly is.

Literacy is an important factor in everyday life. Whether it be books or technology, literacy affects everyone in its own way. It provides a world of both knowledge and pleasure that many people seek in today’s society. Digital literacy is quickly rising as one of the more popular forms of literacy in the United States and abroad. However, despite the benefits it can provide for us, it is important to remember the balance between each. As knowledge and literacy extend horizontally and vertically, we must remember that various options that are available and do our part to value each as their own individual system.
Work Cited


