



Proposed Plan for Digital Literacy at Louisiana State University Eunice

June 12, 2022

Owing to the requirement from Achieving the Dream to increase digital literacy among students at LSU Eunice, the Integrated Learning Center Committee convened a subcommittee to outline a plan of action for improving the digital literacy of LSU Eunice students. The committee included the following members: Dr. Michael Alleman, Dr. Billy Fontenot, Ms. Cassie Jobe-Ganucheau, and Dr. Robert Jones.

Definition

The ILC Committee adopted a provisional definition of digital literacy largely adapted from the work of Professor Hiller Spires, who suggests that to be “digitally literate” students should be able to:

- Utilize current digital tools (including but not limited to Word, PowerPoint, various social media software, creative and collaborative tools from Apple, Google, or other technology companies for content creation).
- Find, evaluate, and consume digital content.
- Create digital content.
- Critique digital content.
- Communicate or share digital content.

Serving the Digital Literacy Needs of LSU Eunice Students

Drawing from a survey of student needs, faculty input, best practices at other universities, and committee members’ experience at other higher education institutions, the subcommittee determined a core set of skills in which students needed to demonstrate competency to be considered digitally literate. The subcommittee divided these skills into two categories: functional literacy and academic literacy. Below are the categories of skills accompanied by proposed methods of implementation.

Functional Literacy

- Navigate and use Moodle.
- Email (including using Outlook).
- Upload documents (word and pdf) for assignments.
- Filename conventions, versioning, and backups.
- Operate approved graphing calculators.
- Use Digital Collaboration Tools.

Students will need many of these skills immediately after or even prior to the start of classes, and the first four listed are all essential for online students; therefore, the committee feels that the LeDoux Library and Learning Commons (LLLC) is best positioned to provide instruction on these skills as part of its online tutorial videos though face-to-face workshops with hands-on instruction could also be offered for the truly perplexed. Through LOUIS, the Louisiana Library Network, the LLLC is a Northstar Digital Literacy location. Students can learn basic skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online and may take assessments to earn digital badges and/or certificates demonstrating end-user abilities. The committee has also previewed CircleIn, which offers students—including online students—an easy and cheap means of creating learning communities, study groups, and academic support groups. The committee feels that CircleIn would be an excellent and immersive method of giving students experience in using digital collaboration tools. Of course, students will only attain functional literacy if they are given sufficient opportunities to use it in academic circumstances; therefore, LSU Eunice faculty will need to integrate functional literacy into their pedagogy and reinforce the instruction that students will be receiving. Fortunately, most faculty already do this. In addition, the committee believes that the Orientation to University Studies course (UNIV 1005) could effectively incorporate instruction on some or all of these skills as part of its mission. According to the course description in the University Catalog, UNIV 1005 introduces students “to a variety of topics critical to student success such as time management, priority setting, learning styles, campus policies and resources, critical thinking, motivation, study skills, test taking, financial literacy, and vocabulary development.” Functional digital literacy would naturally fit into this curriculum.

Academic Literacy

- Evaluate internet and other online sources.
- Access resources and materials from online databases.
- Prepare PowerPoint (or similar) presentations.
- Create short videos.

Academic digital literacy covers digital skills that are essential to performing successful academic work in the 21st century; these skills translate into marketable digital skills for students who are entering the workplace. Because these are higher-order digital skills, the committee believes that they should be incorporated into the curricula of appropriate General Education courses. In discussions among the ILC Committee at large and the Digital Literacy Subcommittee in particular, several courses have been identified as ideal for incorporating these skills into their preexisting curricula. Among them, ENGL 1002 (English Composition), with its focus on research and scholarship, seems most ideal, and since it is a required course for all majors, all students (except those who are exempted due to test score) will have access to digital academic literacy. Evaluating online sources and using databases for research have more or less already been incorporated into the research/scholarship component of ENGL 1002, but students could also be required to produce a presentation summary of

their research (or a summary of their research project) and use it to create a video (with Kaltura or similar software) that they can share with the class. Faculty should be encouraged to be creative as possible, even tailoring specific assignments to the professional needs of each student's major. Of course, General Education courses in specific majors should also be expected to incorporate most of these skills in a discipline-specific manner. Furthermore, the committee might be overlooking other digital skills that are essential to specific disciplines such as the use of advanced microscopes in biology classes; therefore, the committee requests that the university conduct a survey of General Education areas (biological and physical sciences, social sciences, mathematics, humanities, and fine arts) to determine their digital literacy needs and the best means of addressing them.

The committee believes that the incorporation of digital literacy into course curricula incrementally during AY 2022-2023 would enable the university to have fundamental digital literacy with clearly defined and measurable outcomes in place campus-wide by AY 2023-2024.

Faculty Development

The committee assumes that the faculty of LSU Eunice have some experience with digital literacy, though obviously that experience will vary, but the committee cannot assume that all members of the faculty have the kind of competency that teaching digital literacy would require; therefore, the committee believes that providing faculty with professional development opportunities in digital literacy would allow faculty who feel insecure with their degree of expertise in this area to receive the support they would need to feel confident in their implementation of digital literacy in their classes.

The committee hopes that these recommendations will better prepare the students of LSU Eunice to enter the 21st century workforce.