

10. Technology and Literacy

What is digital literacy?

Digital literacy is the ability for all students to use digital tools to effectively communicate, create and share information in the 21st century. Our goal is to help them learn to use digital devices as research and communication tools, and to produce materials that demonstrate their knowledge. We believe new technologies shouldn't serve to replace teaching in the classroom, but rather help to enhance the strategies we already use to meet our students' needs and support their success, in the classroom and beyond.

Our Work in the Classroom

Teachers design lessons to ensure students can explore a variety of technologies to enhance their digital literacy. You might see some of the following in classrooms:

- Instruction and teaching strategies supported by laptops and tablets, SMART Boards, document cameras and student-owned devices (e.g., collaborative writing with Google Docs, or reading, creating and contributing to educational blogs).
- Students using laptops and tablets, e-readers, Chromebooks, student-owned devices and assistive software to further their learning and to show what they know (e.g., using Google Docs with their teachers to edit an essay, or delivering a book report presentation through multimedia like a Prezi presentation or a video).
- Students reading and researching information from websites, blogs, podcasts and videos.

Helping at Home

There are many ways you can support digital literacy in your home. Here are some things you can try:

- Expose your child to a variety of digital tools, such as

desktop computers, laptops, tablets and mobile devices.

- If you have a computer, place it in a common area in your home (e.g., family room or den) and explore online as a family.
- Encourage your teen to ask questions about what they read and view on the Internet, and help them relate it back to what they're learning in school. Coach them on the importance of always thinking critically about the information they read online – not all of what they read may be true. It's also important to remind them of the serious consequences they could face if they plagiarize material from the Internet and hand it in as their own. Reinforce that using the Internet as an online resource has to be done safely and wisely.
- Encourage your teen to think creatively when they approach their assignments – i.e., could they use a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation or make a movie for their project?
- Look for educational sites, games and apps that support your teen's learning needs and assist them in using these tools to strengthen areas of academic challenge (e.g., find an app that helps teens develop their writing skills or understand mathematical concepts).

Helpful Links

For more information, check out these helpful links:

- bit.ly/1gGV7s8 – a Google site created by our District's Technology Integration Planning (TIPS) team – this is a great place to check out helpful digital citizenship resources for students and parents.
- epl.ca – Edmonton Public Library offers a wide variety of online literacy resources for children and young adults.
- commonsensemedia.org – provides helpful tips on using 21st century digital tools with your kids and suggestions for choosing fun, educational games and apps.
- mediasmarts.ca – find a wealth of resources related to online safety and new media issues.