DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP IN THE INTERMEDIATE CLASSROOM

by

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Abstract

Technology is a tool that is increasingly used in today's classroom to encourage engagement, innovation and deeper learning experiences. Students are gaining access to technology at younger ages, yet are not necessarily equipped with the skills and understandings required to use these resources in an effective and responsible manner. To ensure student safety, specific lessons are required to develop a variety of digital literacy skills, such as how to protect personal identities, effective research practices, ways to share information in ethical ways, and steps to ensuring positive online interactions. By developing a series of 60 lesson plans tied directly to the outcomes defined by the British Columbia Ministry of Education in their Digital Literacy Framework, I have initiated work on a comprehensive collection of tools and resources that will hopefully be used to set a consistent standard of safe online behaviours for students across B.C. Feedback garnered from a peer review as well as sharing the project with colleagues indicates the need for such a resource and the potential value of the collection found here. As new and exciting technology emerges, this resource will need to be updated and maintained to ensure that it continues to promote the development of digital literacy skills and practices for all students and to support them on their own journeys towards digital citizenship.

Keywords: Educational Technology, Digital Citizenship, Digital Literacy, Intermediate Classroom

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Purpose of the Major Project

As more teachers move towards implementing technology in their classrooms, a distinct need for digital citizenship awareness and practices has developed. Due to the increased access to a vast amount of information on the internet and the ability to connect with others instantly through the use of a variety of social media tools and online resources, educators recognize the improved prospects for online research, collaboration and presentations. Students, however, can lack the knowledge and experience that would allow them to effectively and appropriately make use of such online resources.

Issues such as the use of student permission forms, attribution of content, copyright laws and maintaining student safety while using online tools were discussed during our OLTD coursework. However, today's students face an even larger number of issues, both in and out of the classroom, like illegal downloading, cyberbullying and use of technology at inappropriate times and in inappropriate ways. Studies such as Lenhart, Madden, Smith, Purcell, Zickuhr, and Rainie (2011) and Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith, and Beaton (2013) have shown that students regularly befriend people unknown to them, share information and pictures that could potentially compromise their safety and/or reputation and hide behind the illusion of anonymity when commenting or posting on other people's content. Recent media coverage of high-profile cases have brought the issue of cyberbullying to the public's attention and media campaigns meant to curb the practice of illegal file sharing and downloading of digital files show that such criminal activity is also on the rise. Participation in these behaviours not only puts students at immediate risk, but can also affect their future college or career applications due to the online image that they are creating for themselves.

Authors such as Berson & Berson (2003), Hengstler (2011), Jones & Finkelhor (2011) and Ribble (2011) emphasize the importance of digital citizenship and have shed light on the dire need for proper instruction in this area. A number of online resources such as Common Sense Media, CyberSmart! and Netsafe focus their efforts on educating youth and children in online practices that promote safety. Further, the British Columbia Ministry of Education has recently released a draft Digital Literacy Framework that outlines skills and understandings that they feel students must acquire in order to effectively work and learn using technology in the classroom, a vast part of which includes digital citizenship outcomes.

It is imperative that the education system adapt to meet the needs of a new online generation and provide students with a strong foundation in the principles of being a responsible digital citizen. Lessons must be developed in order to allow our students to get the most out of their online learning experiences while protecting them from the potential threat of those that would purposefully take advantage of them. These lesson could include strategies for identifying the types and amount of information that students can safely share online and guiding users on how to navigate the internet in controlled, yet meaningful ways.

As an intermediate classroom teacher using technology in British Columbia, I take this issue very seriously. I have a vested interest in keeping my students safe online and providing them with an education in effective digital practices. Over my teaching career I have developed a number of lessons that cover various aspects of digital citizenship to suit my own needs in the classroom, but now seek a comprehensive collection of tools and resources related to all aspects of digital literacy as defined in the Digital Literacy Framework (n.d.). A common place for teachers to develop and share lessons, ideas and activities that encourage safe digital practices

would help to ensure a consistent standard of safe online education for students across British Columbia.

Justification of the Major Project

Over the last three years I have used mobile devices in my classroom and enhanced my teaching using tools and resources found both on the internet and through my coursework in the OLTD program. I have also worked closely with the technology team in my district and supported other teachers in the implementation of technology in their classrooms. During this time I have witnessed first-hand the need for lessons that support digital citizenship practices. Incidences of inappropriate texting between students, the searching and posting of materials that were not school appropriate and questionable comments on other student's profiles or posts make up only a part of my experiences in using online tools with my students. Initially, each incident was dealt with in a similar manner to any other behaviour incident in school; however, through my studies in the OLTD program I began to realize the long lasting and far reaching affects such online occurrences could have. I grew concerned with the relative naiveté shown by my own students in using social media and online collaboration tools and quickly realized the need for lessons to develop their ability to use such resources effectively, safely and ethically.

Researchers such as Debell (2003) report that students are using computers and the internet in their learning as early as preschool and my own experience points to toddlers who can turn on and operate Smartphones with ease. Social media use becomes prevalent amongst teens and pre-teens regardless of regulations and imposed age restrictions put in place to protect children (COPPA, 1998). Boyd, Hargittai, Schultz and Palfrey (2011) showed that almost a third of 10 year olds polled in the UK used social media and Lenhart, Madden, Smith, Purcell, Zickuhr and Rainie (2011) noted that 80% of American teens who are online use social media sites. This

prevalence of internet and social media use is scary considering that most youth do not understand how easily accessible information on their profiles is, the potential long term consequences of sharing what they post and the fact that up to a third of the online contacts of teens are people whom they have never actually met (Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith and Beaton, 2013). The potential for harm is extreme.

There are also huge benefits from using online tools and the reality is that as computer use is becoming more the norm, students will require a firm grounding in safe internet practices to avoid dangers. As online tools and resources are being used more often in the classroom to research, connect and collaborate, teachers must take a leadership role in ensuring the safe and effective use of such tools during school time and on school property. The time has come to be proactive and provide students with lessons about cultivating positive online profiles, making responsible posts, protecting passwords, accounts and personal information online, and building an understanding of how to work effectively and safely online. Lessons can be further extended to include issues of copyright, illegal downloading, collaborating with people from different countries or cultures while being cognizant of issues unique to that area of the world. Critically analyzing sources of information posted on the internet and an individual's legal rights and responsibilities online are also important topics of study. One could even go as far as exploring health issues associated with using technology, from ergonomic issues in how a workstation affects body alignment to the psychological effects that games and social media can have on users. There are many aspects of digital literacy to be explored and a variety of quality resources are available on the internet to challenge, educate and allow students to practice safe online skills.

Technology is simply a tool that is becoming more prevalent in our classrooms, as well as in society as a whole. The benefits of this tool far outweigh the risks of using it; however, students need to have a strong foundation in digital literacy skills and employ effective digital citizenship practices in order to make the most of technology use in their learning.

Challenge to be Addressed

The overall intent of this project is to develop awareness and encourage practices that support digital citizenship in the classroom. It will be aligned directly with the outcomes developed for the Digital Literacy Framework by the B.C. Ministry of Education.

The project will specifically see the development of a resource hub where teachers, parents and students can find access to a variety of tools and lesson plans on their journey towards digital citizenship. This resource, geared mainly towards intermediate students (grades 4, 5 and 6), will identify the major themes in digital literacy as outlined in the Digital Literacy Framework and will include a listing of the proposed outcomes, a brief explanation of why each outcome is an important topic of study, a collection of resources tied to each topic and lesson plans and activity ideas that intend to foster effective online practices. Once complete, the resource hub will be available online along with a presentation that will guide educators through the effective implementation of the lessons in their own classrooms.

Definition of Terms

The following general definitions are provided to assist readers in understanding the scope and purpose of this project:

Copyright – the legal ownership and right to share or distribute work by its owner or creator.

Digital Literacy – the knowledge and ability to effectively implement digital tools in

one's learning. Such tools can include online resources and/or hardware such as

computers

or mobile devices.

ICT – Information and Communication Technology. Often used in resources selected for this

course of study to identify tools and programs that allow users to connect with others,

gather and share information and create representations of their shared learning.

MEDL – the Master's in Educational Leadership program through Vancouver Island University.

Mobile Devices – any hand held device such as a smartphone, media player or communication

device that allows users to use the internet or applications to connect and collaborate with

others to complete work.

OLTD – the Online Learning and Teaching Diploma program through Vancouver Island

University. The coursework for the OLTD program was a precursor to this master's

study.

Social Media – an online tool that allows users to create profiles, connect with others and share

media or information with others.

Technology – though technology is typically defined as any tool that makes a process more

refined

or easier, for the purposes of this paper it is used to describe the use of tools such as

iPods,

iPads, mobile devices, laptops, computers and online resources to improve

student learning in the classroom.

Brief Overview of the Project

Through my research for this project, I became aware of others in the industry who are also championing the need for the development of digital literacies in classrooms and a digital citizenship curriculum that will help to ensure safe online experiences for students. For the purposes of this project, a website will be developed that will house lesson plans for a number of digital literacy concepts and provide access to resources and tools. I will encompass a variety of aspects of digital literacy including copyright, attribution of content, online safety and sharing of information, analysis of websites and information found online, social media use and the building of effective digital footprints. Each lesson plan will include an overview, purpose, outline of a lesson, activity ideas and potentially ideas to adapt lessons for younger, older or struggling students.

The outcomes listed within the proposed Digital Framework, developed by the BC Ministry of Education and available at: https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/dist_learning/digital-literacy.htm, will guide the development of each lesson plan. A variety of books and online resources will also be referenced for topics, activities and ideas in the building of this resource. Further, educators in my school district, as well as members of my OLTD cohort, will be surveyed for topic ideas in the realm of digital citizenship.

Once the proposed lesson plans are completed and compiled on a website, the project will be peer reviewed and revised based on feedback gathered and discussions held. The three items that will come out of this project are a digital citizenship curriculum hub in the form of a website that will house the lesson plans, resource links and activity ideas, a presentation to accompany the resource hub and explain how to implement lessons and activities, and a process paper outlining the parameters of how and why the project was undertaken.

The intent is that this project will endure long after the completion of the coursework requirement of the MEDL program and evolve into a ready reference tool for any educators who want to implement technology use in their classroom. By providing more opportunities for teachers and students to explore digital citizenship concepts and build understandings of how to safely and effectively use online resources, the further intent is that students will become more likely to incorporate these skills into their everyday interactions with technology and a safer online learning environment for all will result.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Student safety when using internet tools and resources is paramount to creating effective online learning environments. Children need to learn how to act and react safely, effectively, responsibly, and morally in an environment where dangers such as lurking predators, misinformation and the potential for cyberbullying attacks are a very real threat. Issues such as appropriate social media use, privacy concerns, storage and sharing of personal information and helping students to develop positive digital footprints need to be explored and monitored by teachers when using online tools with their students. As our society is becoming one of seemingly ubiquitous use of the internet for learning, digital citizenship is not just a new catchphrase, it is a series of essential understandings and skills that all students and teachers must be familiar with in order to ensure their safety online.

In this paper I will outline the ongoing surge in internet and social media use, summarize potential concerns that could arise from that swell and then list potential resources and ideas for teaching digital citizenship to students.

Use of the internet in classrooms across North America, in fact in many parts of the world, has been rapidly increasing over the last two decades. Debell (2003), Franklin (2005), and Boyd, Hargittai, Schultz and Palfrey (2011) all provide statistics that describe the increased use of technology and the internet in the classroom and in society as both teachers and students become more comfortable and adept at integrating technology into their classrooms. What can be quite surprising is the young age at which many children are being exposed to the virtues and challenges of the internet, sometimes with very little guidance or support.

Debell (2003) reports that 80% of Kindergarteners and 67% of children in nursery school use computers and roughly a third and a quarter, respectively, use the internet in their learning. Though differences are noted by population demographic, even in 2003 computer use was prevalent in all levels of education and with the advent of mobile devices since this study, those numbers will be significantly heightened.

Franklin (2005) suggests that the increase in computer use in the classroom is due to increased comfort levels of teachers using technology, largely because of increased exposure during their teacher training programs. Franklin (2005) further notes that virtually all of the upper elementary students (gr 3-6) in the schools that were studied used the internet, while more than two thirds of K-2 students made use of it in their learning. Though some teachers are still wary of working with technology, a distinct shift in philosophy is recognized as many teachers are choosing to explore online tools and resources for their lessons to increase student engagement.

Boyd, Hargittai, Schultz and Palfrey (2011) specifically discuss the use of social media sites by underage account holders. Though most sites require users to be 13 years of age or older, mostly due to regulations imposed by the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) (1998), a large number of pre-teens lie about their age in order to get accounts, many with their parents aware of them creating such profiles or even helping to set them up. Interestingly, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is quoted in the Boyd, et al. (2011) article as saying that he feels younger children should be allowed access to social media, as their experience using it is "an important part of the educational process." (*Facebook's response to circumvention by children of the under–13 ban*).

The reality is that many children, regardless of the restrictions put in place by COPPA are already using social media sites. Boyd, et al. (2011) report that 46% of American 12 year olds use social networking sites and that 44% of online teens admit to lying about their age in order to access them. The numbers are even more alarming in the UK where information suggests that 31% of 10 year olds, 44% of 11 year olds and 55% of 12 year olds are on social media sites, regardless of the age limits. Additionally, Lenhart, Madden, Smith, Purcell, Zickuhr, and Rainie (2011) note that 95% of American teens aged 12-17 are online and that 80% of those use social media sites.

Though Boyd, et al. (2011) note that 78% of parents are concerned about the dangers of their children meeting strangers with ill intentions online or the potential for online activities being tracked and analyzed for direct marketing purposes, they suggest that parents might judge their own children to be more mature than others and see the age restriction as being more a restriction of maturity levels, much like drinking age requirements or movie ratings are often viewed. Thus the blurring of the lines of what is acceptable or not are used as a reason for allowing their children to be on social media sites at a younger age than required by COPPA regulations.

The increased use of the internet in the classroom is commendable, even necessary, especially given its central place in the future careers of many of our students. Tarte (2013) touts social media use in the classroom, noting that many students (and their parents) already make use of social media tools and suggesting that if teachers do not have an online presence they risk losing out on the value of an effective communication tool. There are, however, some very valid cautions and concerns that, as teachers, we must be aware of when using the internet and social media in the classroom. These concerns include, but are not limited to, maintaining the privacy

of personal information, the very real risk of cyberbullying and the need to cultivate and promote a positive self-image online.

Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Gasser, Duggan, Smith, and Beaton (2013) provide a plethora of statistical information about the types of information teens share on social media sites. Particularly alarming is the finding that many teens do not believe that anyone other than their friends or followers can view their profiles (Madden, et al. (2013)). Though many teens do take steps to protect their information, the majority are posting pictures, videos and personal information that could be used to track both their location and interests, making them easy prey to the tech savvy aggressor. Also concerning is the number of friends or followers that teens have that they don't know or haven't met in person - up to 33% of their contacts according to Madden, et al. (2013). Though this number could represent friends of friends or celebrities they choose to follow, it extends the number of people that have access to student profiles and could be aware of their movements, preferences or interests. It also increases the potential for online stalking or harassment by someone pretending to be a friend or a part of their age or interest group.

Hengstler (2013) notes: "BC educators, administrators, schools and districts must make sure that the content posted does not provide any specific personal and identifiable information without express written consent of a minor student's parent or guardian" (p. 5). As pre-teens become teens it becomes more and more difficult for parents or teachers to effectively monitor their children's and student's movements online. Madden, et al. (2013) note that use of Facebook by teens is dwindling as more and more adults (including their parents) are infiltrating the site. Teens are moving on to sites like Twitter, Snapchat, Instragram and others less known by their parents. Not only is this concerning from a lack of parental monitoring perspective, but it is also

potentially harmful due to the 'disappearing' nature of such instant messaging sites where pictures or text can only be viewed for a matter of seconds before the post is automatically removed, especially since a simple screen shot takes away that 'disappearing' nature, allowing users to easily collect and share compromising photos and information with others. While parents or teachers may try to track student use of social media sites, new apps and sites are appearing regularly and it is becoming increasingly difficult to monitor and contain the type and amount of information being shared on social media sites.

Between openly accessible account profiles and information readily shared by users themselves, the potential for cyberbullying exists on an alarming scale. An inappropriate picture captured and shared for entire networks to see, a verbal disagreement that goes viral, or a nervous teen looking for attention by posting pictures or comments seeking advice, comment or approval; all open the door to the potential to cause harm to others on a global scale. Many high profile cases as reported by Leung and Bascaramurty (2012) and Connolly (2014) have garnered attention to the issue of cyberbullying, noting that the ability to pose as someone else or comment on sites anonymously using social media allows people to attack others in ruthless and harmful ways. Lenhart, et al (2011) further note that while 88% of teen users of social media sites have witnessed online cruelty in some form or another, a large number tend to ignore the cruelty without responding to it.

It can be said that what happens online, stays online…..forever. Students in the 21st Century classroom must be made aware of the impact of every post, picture and tag that they share and how their reputation, and the reputations of others, can easily be altered by an unfortunate or inappropriate post. Hengstler (2011) emphasizes the importance of cultivating a

positive self-image online and working to overcome potentially negative consequences by monitoring and removing inappropriate tags and posts on social media sites. Lenhart, et al. (2011) report that only 55% of teens surveyed stated that they chose not to post content that might harm them or result in people perceiving them in a negative way. That leaves an alarming amount of teens who are not specifically concerned about what they are posting online or what their profile says about them.

Issues such as cyberbullying, privacy of personal information and creating positive reputations online are as old as the internet itself. However, restricting student access to social media or internet resources is not necessarily the answer. Setting age restrictions for social media sites or restricting student use will not magically make the problem disappear, especially considering the reality that so many teens are already working around such rules and regulations. The fact is that students are already using social media, chat enabled games and various web tools to collaborate and communicate online. As teachers, we need to accept this fact and work to ensure that students have a strong foundation in digital citizenship skills to ensure that they are aptly prepared to work online in a responsible and ethical manner. By pre-loading students with effective strategies for using social media and learning online we can help them to act and react to online incidents in safe, effective, and responsible ways that will improve the overall safety and quality of their social media activity.

There are many organizations such as Common Sense Media and CyberSmart! that provide lessons, videos and activities to help educate students in the foundations of digital citizenship. From these resources teachers can compile a comprehensive curriculum for all ages of students that can be tailored to individual school needs to ensure that proper understandings and practices are in place when students are using technology in the classroom.

In response to the increasing complexity of the digital world in which we live and learn, the BC Ministry of Education has recently developed a Digital Literacy Framework (n.d.) to outline and guide teachers in their use of technology in the classroom. Literacies such as analysis, evaluation, creation and communication are explored for all grade levels. The framework also provides teachers with links to resources, activities and a number of lessons to develop effective student use of technology.

Ribble (2011) provides a comprehensive look at what digital citizenship is and what it looks like. He defines digital citizenship as "the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with regard to technology use" (p. 4) and outlines nine elements that include digital access, commerce, communication, literacy, etiquette, law, rights and responsibilities, health and wellness and security (self-protection). Ribble (2011) provides definitions of each element and specific examples of what both good and irresponsible uses look like. He also notes that many parents are not well versed in the use of many of the technologies that their children are using and don't understand how to use them effectively and responsibly, thus providing poor role modelling opportunities for their children. Ribble also outlines a plan for implementing a digital citizenship program in schools and provides a variety of lessons and activities to help teachers do so. These lessons encompass a variety of topics, including ensuring fair and equitable access to technology for all, how to communicate appropriately and how to protect yourself from injuries that can result from technology use, both physical and psychological. Ribble has developed a vast body of work on the topic of digital citizenship and he is quoted in a number of other resources as a basis for their work.

Berson and Berson (2003) note that education is of the utmost importance in order to protect children from harmful online content and emphasize the need to "instill a set of

appropriate online behaviors for safe and rewarding use of the Internet" (p. 1). They also speak to the anonymity factor and how it allows youth to be less concerned with acting in a respectful manner online. This is heightened by the lack of contact or witnessing an immediate reaction which might affect the way they would approach others in a face to face interaction. Berson and Berson also speak to the vastness of the internet which causes students to be less concerned with being caught and punished for their actions and also results in students inadvertently being disrespectful of others based on misunderstandings of cultural norms when dealing with people from outside of their geographical area. They conclude by providing ideas for teachers to promote safe, ethical and legal behaviours online.

Websites such as www.commonsensemedia.org and www.cybersmartcurriculum.org, among others, provide ready resources for teachers and parents that include simulations of online incidents, background material about what information is appropriate or inappropriate to share online, how to respond to cyberbullying attacks and developing effective digital footprints with students. These activities also teach students how to critically analyze a source of information to determine whether it is factual or not, to think before sharing information with others and to ensure that information they do choose to share is appropriate and not personally identifiable. Jones and Finkelhor (2011) suggest that rather than scaring students into acting safely online, a better approach to preventing inappropriate online behaviour would be a program showing examples of positive responses to online incidents, providing common situations and outcomes that students might encounter and providing statistical information to emphasize how prevalent certain online behaviours are.

Zuccato, & Al-Shamari (n.d.) also provide a resource developed for Microsoft entitled *Fostering Digital Citizenship* in which they note "[t]he online world presents great opportunities

for young people, but it is not without risks. We can mitigate some of those risks by helping young people develop a strong sense of digital citizenship" (p. 5). The resource outlines elements of digital citizenship in practice, identifies risks associated with technology use and lists actions that can be taken by parents, teachers, and the government to ensure the safety of everyone online. They emphasize that "[r]ather than relying solely on protective measures, an approach to online safety that includes digital citizenship will help young people safely interact in the online world. Teaching them about digital literacy and digital ethics and etiquette is no longer merely an option; it is an imperative." (p. 5).

In summary, students are already collaborating, researching and sharing information online in the form of posts, videos and projects that they share via social media. In many ways this is a positive endeavour, allowing the creation of shared knowledge and the expression of who they are. However, not everything that students are sharing online is appropriate or resulting in the creation of a positive reputation. Students at a young age do not necessarily have the wherewithal to understand that things that they say or do now could end up harming them in the future. Negative images and comments can have far reaching effects – not only in the here and now in the form of bullying or ostracizing, but also in the long term as students move into the workforce and apply for jobs or complete college applications that could be compromised based on an inappropriate post that they made as a teen. As more and more of our students are exploring the world of social media and online interaction, they are unwittingly opening themselves up to potential harm based on their naïve world view and inexperience in dealing with issues on such a large scale.

At the same time we cannot simply keep students hidden away on the internet, closed off from the world and expect them to know how to act safely and responsibly when they get older.

What students need is a program of gradual release of control where they are guided through a series of lessons that teach digital citizenship skills with hands on experience of how to act and react to others on the internet. Though they may not always follow the rules and guidelines set out to keep them safe, it is imperative that we, as educators, provide them with the tools and safety protocols necessary to allow them to do so. We must prepare our students to be able to practice effective and responsible online behaviours and impress upon them the necessity to do so.

Chapter 3 – Procedures & Methods

Major Project Design

The intent of this project was to help bring digital citizenship skills and practices into the classroom through the development of a series of lesson plans tied directly to the outcomes listed in the B.C. Ministry of Education's Digital Literacy Framework (n.d.). It concentrated on seeing the creation of a website that would become a resource hub containing lesson plans, activity ideas and links to valuable resources where further information on each topic could be found. With a notable increase in technology use in B.C. classrooms and the resulting need for lessons in the safe and responsible use of technology, this collection was meant to support and guide teachers in their own exploration of effective digital citizenship practices.

It was an enormous task to develop such a large collection of lesson plans for this project and it quickly became clear that I would not be able to reach every outcome listed. First of all, many of the outcomes are intended for grades 1-3 and 10-12, both of which are out of the range of my teaching experience and, thus, I found it difficult to plan lessons for an intended audience that I did not know. Secondly, there are 140 outcomes listed in the Digital Literacy Framework and it would take months, if not years, to develop a comprehensive resource base for every topic and level included. Instead, I narrowed my focus by identifying specific outcomes relevant to my own needs and interests. I then developed a lesson plan template and created a website (http://ksviudigitalcitizenshipdlf.weebly.com/) to house all of my work. Finally, I wrote 60 detailed and specific lesson plans that touched on 51 of the outcomes itemized in the framework. In doing so, I reached my goal of providing at least one lesson plan for each subtopic of the Digital Literacy Framework, covering topics such as research skills, copyright issues, digital citizenship practices and the implementation of new technologies in educational settings.

A number of the lesson plans that I developed outline practices that I already use in my own classroom; however, many more were developed specifically for the purposes of this project. Although many of the plans encourage the use of technology in innovative ways to complete the assigned tasks, classroom discussion and collaboration were often required in order for students to play an important role in the development of their own knowledge surrounding technology use. Though these lesson plans contain ideas or suggestions for only one specific way of covering the outcomes, I have also developed a number of lesson plans for the same outcomes to show that there are a variety of resources and many different ways to achieve the same end result.

I knew from the beginning that I would have to define parameters for the scope of this project and would not be able to create lessons for the entire framework. I have, however, reached my goal of preparing 60 lesson plans to complete the development phase of my project. Upon reflection, I now see this website as simply a starting point on my own journey towards implementing effective digital citizenship practices in my classroom. There is definitely room for further study and development and there will always be new and engaging resources to link to, ideas to share and activities that will excite students and help them to build understanding in this field. My hope now is that this starting point will engage other educators in the need for this line of instruction and assist them on their own journeys towards digital citizenship.

Major Project Development

The basis for this project was the Digital Literacy Framework (n.d.), drafted by the British Columbia Ministry of Education and available for review on their website at: https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/dist_learning/digital-literacy.htm. The framework, which identifies outcomes that promote digital literacies in today's classrooms, is broken into six sections:

Research and Information Literacy; Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making; Creativity and Innovation; Digital Citizenship; Communication and Collaboration; and Technology Operations and Concepts. All of the lesson plans developed as part of this master's project are tied to specific outcomes listed in the framework. There are 140 outcomes for a variety of digital literacy topics and I realized very quickly upon starting the project just how large the undertaking of developing lesson plans for every outcome would be. By focusing on the development of lesson plans and activity ideas for specific outcomes within the framework, the more manageable scope ensured the successful completion of the project, leaving the potential for further development if, and when, resources permit.

After spending three weeks writing and fine tuning the first two chapters of my process paper, I started to work on the project by choosing outcomes that were relevant to my teaching assignment, grades 4, 5 and 6, and personal interests, primarily digital citizenship. As I reviewed the outcomes, however, I found that there were many slated for grades 10-12 that were also quite applicable for younger grades. For instance, the impact of cyberbullying and the anonymity of posting comments online does not only pertain to older students, it is also an issue of huge importance for younger students who are just beginning to develop an understanding of the potential long-term effects of their online interactions. As a result, I included select outcomes from the 1-3 and 10-12 grade levels in my intended list to work from.

In the end, I was able to identify 56 outcomes specific to my needs, including at least one from each subtopic in the framework, therefore covering each aspect of digital literacy outlined by the Ministry. I then set out to work on developing and tweaking a lesson plan template (Appendix A). After a few revisions, my template included a range of headings, such as the importance or significance of each lesson, the intended duration, the applicable grade ranges as

identified by the Ministry, links to additional resources, outcomes that could be met from other subject areas and possible adaptations for younger and older students, as well as the proposed lesson plans and activities themselves. During this process, I also developed a tracking system on my website to identify each outcome by section, subsection and outcome number in the framework. This system made it easier for me to organize my work and track my progress.

From there I worked to research and formulate an understanding of the importance of each outcome and started to plan how each lesson would look in the classroom. I also spent time collecting resources for each topic and bookmarking them for future reference. At this point, I realized the need for a place to house all of my work, so I began to develop a website titled Digital Citizenship in the Intermediate classroom (http://ksviudigitalcitizenshipdlf.weebly.com/).

This is one aspect of the project that I am particularly proud of. Prior to my OLTD coursework I had not done much creating of my own using Web 2.0 tools. Through the completion of my graduate degree, I created a number of websites and have developed a certain level of proficiency in building pages to suit my needs. Though the name is long, each element has a purpose: I chose my initials (ks), the institution for which I am working on this project: Vancouver Island University (viu), the fact that it is about (digital citizenship) and the basis for the work: the Digital Literacy Framework (dlf). It took me a number of days to develop a format for the site and determine what information that I wanted to include in it. The finished product is comprised of an introduction on the Welcome page that includes information from my proposal, a page for both the project outline and a short biography of the author, a page containing an overview of the Digital Literacy Framework with links to the Ministry website, and a separate page for each of the sections of the framework which include the outcomes that are listed for each. I also added a references page, which seems somewhat redundant as the references and

resources are cited within each lesson plan, but it gave me a place to cite where I found the pictures used on the website, an important aspect of my own digital citizenship lessons. Finally, I added a blog page for each element in order to allow people to comment on the website and lesson plans contained within it during the peer review process.

The result is an esthetically please, simple and easy to navigate website that clearly identifies the location of each section of the framework. The site contains a lot of information and resource links in a logical and organized manner and I am quite pleased with how it turned out. A substantial amount of time was spent in designing, populating the site with information and tweaking the overall look and format. In the end I feel that the published result portrays a good representation of my work and it was well worth the time and effort spent to develop the website.

After completing the groundwork for the project, I began to take on the seemingly insurmountable task of actually creating the lesson plans for my chosen outcomes. While writing the proposal for this project and the preliminary chapters, I found myself eager to get to the main part of the project – the lesson planning itself. However, after many consecutive days of brainstorming, researching and formulating lesson plans, I found myself longing to be able to simply write another chapter of my process paper. In order for the finished product to prove valuable for B.C. educators, I spent between 80 and 100 hours working on the exhausting and challenging task of lesson planning as I tried to maintain a high level of creativity, relevance and accountability in my work.

In developing the lesson plans, I started with outcomes that I have already implemented in my own classroom. This was an easy way to transition into developing lessons and allowed me to realize the need for amendments to the lesson plan template before getting too deep into

the creative process. I enjoyed this part of the project because it was hands on and doing what I initially intended for the project, but also because it involved searching the internet for resources and links. I spent many afternoons getting lost in the thick of it all as my eyes were once again opened to the vast amount of resources available.

Some lessons that I developed can be completed in one lesson as they cover a small aspect of digital literacy. Others are quite involved and lengthy, covering multiple aspects of digital literacy and requiring multiple lessons over a period of weeks or even months. All of the lessons can be modified to suit the needs of individual teachers and the subject(s) they are teaching. However, a requirement of use for all of the lessons is an open mind to bringing technology into the classroom with the goal of enhancing student learning. Teachers should be confident and prepared to deal with the negative aspects that can occur, such as limited access to technology, lack of strong Wi-Fi, varying levels of student experience using technology or online resources that are 'down' for periods of time, as well as the positive growth that can be found when students use a tool effectively. Teachers also need to lead by example and support their students and other staff in their use of technology. This is not to say that they need to be experts, far from it, but they need to understand how to work with technology and should have experience using tools like wiki's, social media tools such as Skype, Facebook or Instragram, and other collaborative and communicative technologies.

I also tried to make use of resources that are free and easily available on the web. What I did not intend was for teachers to have to create an endless series of profiles or for students to be required to remember login names and passwords for use on multiple sites. Further, I understand that classroom funding is precious and cannot be used to purchase numerous licenses for website

resources. Luckily, there are a large number of online resources that are easy to use and free for students and so I was still able to develop many exciting lessons tied to digital literacy.

Throughout my work I kept a journal to track my progress. In reviewing my journal entries I found that my eagerness and motivation formed the pattern of a series of waves over the length of the project. Initially, I was quite excited to get moving and dive in to the fun part of lesson planning. That eagerness quickly waned when, during my research, I came across the website MediaSmarts (n.d.) at http://mediasmarts.ca/. After embarking on what I thought would be a unique and exciting endeavour, I found what seemed to be an exact version of what my proposed project was to be – and a Canadian version to boot! Though initially disappointed, I soon came to see discrepancies in what they had accomplished and what I was trying to do. I realized that a lot of the information contained on their site was developed with middle to high school students in mind and that the intent seemed to be to integrate technology into other curriculums, such as Language Arts and Social Studies, but not specifically to focus on digital citizenship skills. Though associations and connections could be made to their lessons, I felt that specific lessons in digital literacy concepts were still needed for the intermediate classroom. Since my focus was solely on digital citizenship skills and outcomes while incorporating elements of other subjects, I felt that there was enough discrepancy to allow me to proceed with my work and that the two resources could work side by side to provide teachers with more options and information.

My optimism improved and I set about starting to create digital literacy lesson plans. Again, there was an ebb in motivation when I realized just how much work the project was going to be. After my first day of lesson planning, I wrote:

> Truth be told the first lesson plan took ages to create. I was fighting with the format, changing the layout of my webpage, saving and then fixing and re-saving the template again and finding a format that worked for me. I spent a lot of time on the organizational aspects of the project and a lot of time developing lesson plans, too. As I kept at it, the lesson plans came quicker. I got into the groove a bit and was able to produce 4 decent lesson plans. There is a lot of work collecting resources and ideas to put these together – more so than I thought. I finished the day discouraged but hopeful that as I get better, these will come faster. (Sward, 2014)

As I crafted more lesson plans, it did, indeed, become a more streamlined process, but that did not mean it was any easier. Though some would take me only an hour or so to create, others took three to four hours to gather resources, research information, find unique and interesting ways for students to work with the information and write out the lesson plan. Mentally, the process was exhausting and I often felt overwhelmed by my task. As I pushed myself to get the job done, I began to notice distinct patterns in my work habits. If I could get an early start at it, I seemed to make a lot of headway, but through the long hot afternoons it was a real struggle to get work done. At night I would rally and have another burst of progress between ten o'clock and midnight, but that also made for long days of lesson planning and usually resulted in me not having the early start that I needed. This stage was definitely overwhelming, exhausting and fraught with frustrations. There were many times where I lacked the drive and focus needed to continue, but once I became attuned to my work patterns, I found that I was less harsh on myself when I lacked motivation and often allowed myself to give in to the many distractions that surrounded me.

About halfway through the planning process I had one particularly discouraging day where I felt that it was unlikely that anyone would even read the lesson plans I was writing or use the resource collection I was creating. Luckily for me, that day fell right before a planned family outing and the break in work and resulting perspective gained allowed me to come back

to my lesson planning refreshed, ready to work and able to see the value in what I was creating. Even though my project work was hanging over me on my 'day off', it was important for me to find that balance in order to be able to move forward in a positive manner.

The second half of the project proved easier than the first, partly because I was into the groove of lesson planning and knew my template well and partly because I decided to divide my work into themes. Rather than jump around within the framework and compete lesson plans here and there, I decided to focus on one topic within the framework and work on those lessons for the entire day. I found this approach to be much easier as I was researching similar information which allowed me to cover more area in less time. At this point, as well, I began to see the light at the end of the tunnel and gained momentum from being on the downward slope.

I finished off on a high note with 60 lesson plans completed (four more than originally intended) and 51 of the outcomes covered. I was thrilled with having achieved such a goal that I had set out for myself, felt one step closer to my overall achievement of earning my master's degree and set about publishing my work for peer review with my heart in my throat and my stomach all a flutter. I sent the link to my website out to my OLTD cohort via Facebook and logged on to Google+ to search out some communities from which I could request feedback. In doing so I immediately experience a crushing sense of anxiety and dread. As I flipped through community after community I saw amazing tools and resources that I had not even considered, looked at things other teachers were doing in their classrooms that I had never even imagined and read about technologies that I had never even heard of. Here I was developing new and cutting edge lessons for digital citizenship and I felt that I was not even up to date in my efforts! Well, it figures that I had to have one last ebb before the final surge of motivation. I left it for the night and gave myself a pep talk. I looked back over what I had accomplished, over the variety

of amazing lesson plans that I had created and at the professional looking website where I had compiled all of my work and told myself, one more time, that there was great value in my project and that it was exactly what I had intended it to be – a good starting point for those setting out to use technology in their classrooms in an effective and responsible way. I knew from the start that it was not going to cover every aspect of the Digital Literacy Framework and, as such, that it would always be a work in progress with great potential for further development in the years to come. I now view it as the starting point of my own journey in digital citizenship and as a basis for my work and learning after the completion of my degree work. That is what I wanted it to be and that is exactly what it has turned out to be.

Major Project Delivery/Implementation

After working for over a month developing lesson plans and gathering resources, I felt the project was ready for a peer review. On August 8th, 2014, I solicited a review from my OLTD cohort members via Facebook. After my 'pep talk', I also sought feedback via three Google+ communities (EdTech, School Technology Leadership and OLTD) and posted it for the world to see on Twitter (#digitalliteracy, #edtech). I emailed the link to a number of friends, family members and colleagues requesting that they review it and provide me with feedback on the website itself.

I requested that the peer review be completed and feedback be provided by August 20th, 2014, at which time I would review the responses and make amendments to the project as necessary, leading to the completion of my Field/Beta Testing and Findings (Chapter 4) and Conclusions and Recommendations (Chapter 5). Upon completion, my project was submitted to my faculty supervisor prior to it being forwarded on to the Dean of the Faculty of Education at Vancouver Island University for approval.

Access to the site will remain open and it will also continue to be shared with friends and colleagues throughout B.C. The finished project will be posted on various social media and networking sites and I will continue to solicit feedback, make amendments and add resources and lesson plans as I come across ideas and useful links. In this way, my project will continue to evolve in order to provide ongoing support to those looking to implement digital literacy lessons in their own classrooms.

Chapter 4 – Field/Beta Testing and Findings

Beta Testing – Methods and Process

The overall goal of this master's degree project was to create a resource collection that would assist educators in providing a strong foundation for their students in the principles of being a responsible digital citizen. Issues such as sharing information, acting appropriately online, developing positive digital footprints, effective research practices, respecting copyright laws, and being open to exploring and learning with new technologies were researched. Following that appropriate technologies and programs were chosen, and lesson plans were developed that would help encourage students and teachers to work and learn online in a safe and responsible manner. Intended deliverables, as outlined in the project proposal, included a resource website to house the work, 56 lesson plans covering various outcomes listed in the Digital Literacy Framework, a presentation to accompany the website explaining how to implement the various lessons, and this process paper to detail the development, testing and implementation phases of my major project.

Upon the completion of the work of creating the resource hub website, an online presentation and 60 lesson plans tied to the British Columbia Ministry of Education's Digital Literacy Framework (https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/dist_learning/digital-literacy.htm, I chose to request a peer review of my work in order to test the validity and usefulness of my project. In doing so, I was depending on the experiences and expertise of my colleagues in both lesson planning and technology use in education. I felt that my cohort group and trusted colleagues would be able to provide critical and insightful feedback relevant to my needs and to the technology use in education subject area.

In preparation for the peer review, I requested feedback via a variety of resources. First, I posted a link to my website, Digital Citizenship in the Intermediate Classroom (http://ksviudigitalcitizenshipdlf.weebly.com/), to my OLTD cohort members on our private Facebook page, requesting that they review my work and provide me with any ideas, recommendations or resource links that could improve my compilation. Then I posted similar requests on three Google + Communities that I am a member of (EdTech, Technology in Education and OLTD). I also requested a review from friends, family and local colleagues via Facebook and email. Finally, I posted the link publicly on Twitter, asking for a peer review of my master's work (#digitalliteracy, #edtech). In addition, I have had the opportunity to observe my own students experiencing a number of these lesson plans in years past and was therefore able to personally reflect upon their effectiveness in the educational environment.

I presented my published site for peer review from August 8-20, 2014. Although school was not in session at this time, I chose these dates for a number of reasons. First, I felt that my teacher and OLTD colleagues would be enjoying a relaxing summer break and would have time to peruse my work at their leisure, hopefully gaining momentum for their back to school planning routines by finding usable lesson plans and garnering some level of excitement to try them out when they got back to school. My hope in sending the link out via Twitter was also to reach some of my American counterparts as they also return to the classroom mid to late August and might be able to implement and test out the lessons sooner. Even though the curriculum was created for use in B.C. classrooms, most of the themes are relevant in all educational technology settings. Secondly, with the current job action going on in the B.C. public school system, it remains unclear as to when school will return to session and I was hesitant to leave the implementation phase open indefinitely for fear that it would never be completed. Finally, I had

set a personal goal to have my master's degree work completed prior to the proposed school start date in September and worked diligently throughout the summer in order to achieve that goal.

For all of these reasons, a review of the process and potential impacts of the lesson plans was requested and feedback was gathered over a 13 day period mid-August. The intent was to determine whether there was inherent value in the work that I had completed and decide if the lessons would be relevant and usable in today's intermediate classroom. After the August 20th deadline passed I reviewed each response and compiled them into a single document attached as Appendix B.

Findings of Beta Testing

My 'testers' spent time on my website, read the lesson plans that I created, critiqued their value, analyzed the resources and information provided there and generally navigated the site to determine its relevance and ease of use. Though I was initially quite anxious at putting my work out for a peer review, I was quite relieved when the response to my work was overwhelmingly positive. Upon reflection I found that each of the suggestions made would vastly improve the overall functionality of the website and quality of the lesson plans. Further consideration of each suggestion is outlined in Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Recommendations.

I received a total of 15 responses to my work in various forms including emails, blog responses on my website, informal discussions with colleagues, personal reflections for improvements and comments in the Google + communities in which the link was posted. These responses included much praise for my work and 36 suggestions for improvement, 19 of which were simple grammatical or spelling errors. I also received three requests to share my work with others and one further suggestion that it be shared with my district and the online teaching

community in general. It was particularly gratifying to receive accolades from three of my OLTD instructors as I feel that they are truly in tune with the educational technology field.

Overall, my reviewers felt the site was well laid out, clear and concise and generally easy to use. They noted that the lesson plans were well organized, easy to follow and had some very creative ideas and links to excellent resources. I received compliments that my project was an "[i]mpressive consolidation of work that ties back to your work in the OLTD program. Well done! You have created an overwhelmingly useful site for you and others. This is a great Masters project and great work for you, your district, and the online teaching community" (LaBonte, R. as cited in Sward, 2014). It was also noted that I had "done an incredible amount of work. Such an important topic and your lesson plans will be valuable to many" was a comment. A VIU administrator stated, "[y]our work is of the highest quality and is testament to your dedication to teaching and learning in an online context." And one of my longest and most trusted advisors, responded, "May I say that I am impressed. What a quantity and quality of work you have compiled. I am proud of you. Then I need to say I am ticked I did not have all this stuff last year when I could have made good use of it. I would love to be able to share all of this with students of my own. This needs to be shared with educators" (Sward, 2014). This recognition of the value of the project speaks volumes. The purpose of the site was to provide educators with a resource collection to help build a foundation of digital literacy skills and it seems clear that it has achieved this goal. The project was recognized to have both value in the education community and relevance as student technology use increases, both in and out of the classroom.

One notable suggestion for improvement was that the lesson plans and other documents attached to the site as files should open into a separate window when clicked on. The reasoning for this is to allow the user to have multiple files open at once, as well as to remove the need to

navigate back to the previous page, as opposed to simply closing out of the file. As testers navigated the site and proceeded to close out of a lesson plan, they unintentionally closed out of the site because the lesson plan had not been opened into its own tab. This is simply a formatting suggestion to promote ease of use and to make it less frustrating for users as they work their way around the site. Having experienced this frustration many times on other sites, I can see the benefit of opening files into new tabs. I was not aware that this was even an issue on my site, but appreciate the fact that people removed from the process of creating the site could pick up on this aspect prior to the site being fully published and distributed.

Another suggestion of huge importance was the copyrighting of the material that is contained within the site. Though I cannot take credit for the resources linked to on the site and in the lesson plans, I did create 60 unique and engaging lesson plans of my own and did not indicate any copyright of my work at all, something which stands directly against the copyright issues discussed in the Digital Citizenship section of the site. This is also a simple fix with the use of Creative Commons permissions that will protect my work from being copied and sold for profit.

A question was raised as to whether the lesson plans were linear or could stand alone and be used individually to suit a teacher's specific needs. It is important to emphasize that each lesson, and for that matter, each topic contained within the Digital Literacy Framework, can stand alone and be used individually to achieve specific goals, however, they can also be used in conjunction with other chosen lesson plans to complete a themed unit of lessons that covers many aspects of digital literacy. The use of the site and the lesson plans within it are dependent on each teacher's specific needs and interests.

One reviewer suggested that I include a 'required materials' section on the lesson plan template. About halfway through the lesson planning phase I came to this conclusion myself and felt at the time that it was too late to add it in as I would have to go back and fix all of the lesson plans that I had already completed, however, I do agree that it would be a valuable section to include on the lesson plans and will amend them so that teachers can quickly review each lesson to determine whether they can implement it based on the tools and resources available to them.

Other suggestions were made, such as an additional resource to be shared, the shift to attribute sources of pictures used to the bottom of each page as opposed to housing them all on the References page, and the creation of a community collaboration blog page where educators could share their experiences, add to the resource collection and identify favourite lesson plans or note issues that arose from the implementation of one of them. Upon reflection, I have also noted a few housekeeping issues such as shortening the links to some resources and adding names to the top of each lesson plan.

The field testing phase of this project provided me with valuable suggestions on how to improve the end product. Though I did not receive as much feedback as I had initially hoped for, based on the responses I did receive I am confident of the inherent value in the work that I have completed. This project was always intended to be a continuously evolving entity as new ideas, new resources and new technologies were developed and as new issues or concerns around technology use in education arose. Though this curriculum is by no means complete, the goal of developing a comprehensive resource base that would help build awareness of digital literacy issues and develop rules and guidelines for the effective use of technology in the classroom was achieved. This project stands as a valuable resource for teachers who are looking to implement technology use in their classrooms and will hopefully assist students in transferring the digital

literacy skills they learn through the lessons into their everyday technology use, thus creating a

safer, more effective online learning environment for all.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

As technology use in British Columbia classrooms has been on the rise, the need for digital literacy education has also increased. Emphasized by Zuccato, & Al-Shamari (n.d.) when they wrote "[r]ather than relying solely on protective measures, an approach to online safety that includes digital citizenship will help young people safely interact in the online world. Teaching them about digital literacy and digital ethics and etiquette is no longer merely an option; it is an imperative" (p. 5), the need for lessons in digital principles has now become essential. The possibility for harm coupled with the potential long-term impacts of inappropriate technology use must be guarded against, specifically when technology is used as a tool to support student learning in the classroom. Thus, the need has arisen for teachers to develop high standards for the acceptable use of technology in the educational setting and instruct students on the importance of adopting such values.

Having recognized this need in my own practice, I embarked upon this project intending to develop a set of lesson plans tied to the digital citizenship outcomes found in the British Columbia Ministry of Education's Digital Literacy Framework. Though my focus was quite narrow, the framework opened my eyes to other potential digital literacy issues, which then broadened the scope of my project to include more than just digital citizenship lessons. By building a resource collection around a variety of technology related themes, I felt that I could share my knowledge and experiences using technology in the classroom. In this way I could support other educators to develop their own effective practices that would, in turn, help to ensure the safety of their students while learning online. Using the framework as a guide, my

goal was to develop lesson plans that promoted critical thinking skills and allowed for individual creativity, while developing a deeper understanding of safe and acceptable online practices.

As my project progressed, I developed a total of 60 lesson plans covering topics ranging from preventing cyberbullying to determining the reliability of online sources, and then built a website to house all of my work (http://ksviudigitalcitizenshipdlf.weebly.com/). Upon the completion of the development phase, I published my work and requested a peer review, depending on my experienced colleagues to provide me with critical feedback and judge the relevance and functionality of the lesson plans and resources that I had compiled. I received both constructive feedback and praise for my work with many reviewers noting that they felt it would be a valuable addition to existing resources and a useful tool to share with educators across B.C.

The suggestions garnered during the peer review identified a number of formatting and grammatical errors, as well as a number of important alterations that needed to be made, such as claiming copyright of the materials I had produced and including a community blog page where teachers would have the opportunity to share their own lesson plans and support each other in their experiences using the resource. Each of the suggestions highlighted a valid concern and will guide the revisions and further development of my work.

The testing phase reiterated the need for such a resource and the overwhelmingly positive response I received from my peer review confirmed the value of the collection that I had developed. Other digital literacy resources are available online, in fact, they proliferate the internet, however this work fills a need for a resource base for local educators by housing a collection of activities, resources and lesson plans specifically defined by a proposed curriculum in British Columbia. It will also serve as a functional starting point for students and teachers

embarking on a journey of learning with technology and help to encourage its safe and effective use along the way.

One of the biggest drawbacks of the entire project was the amount of time and effort that went into developing each individual lesson plan. Through years of experience using some aspects of digital literacy in the classroom, a few of the lesson plans simply involved outlining the process that I generally follow, and therefore took only an hour or so to create. However, a vast number of the lesson plans required hours of research, reflection and fine tuning to end up with a unique and usable method to achieve the specific outcome. Working on my own, close to 100 hours of this project were spent on the lesson planning portion alone. Given the timelines I set for finalizing the project, this severely restricted the number of lesson plans that could be completed. It is recognized that with unlimited time, manpower and support, a dynamic and comprehensive collection of resources that is tied directly to the Ministry of Education's Digital Literacy Framework could be developed to support digital literacy instruction in all levels of B.C. classrooms.

A further perceived drawback of this resource would be the time required to maintain it, once completed, and to ensure that it continually remained up to date. Expired links to resources that have moved or been replaced would need to be tracked, new tools and resources would need to be researched, and lesson plans would continuously need to be developed as new and exciting technologies were created. If modifications were made to the curriculum itself, changes would also need to be made to the resource to reflect new or omitted items. As well, the proposed community collaboration blog area would need to be monitored with new posts being vetted or responded to as necessary. This in itself would be a huge job and a time consuming responsibility.

My focus on outcomes tied to the intermediate level also leaves this resource largely unfinished for the primary and middle/high school levels. Though these levels are out of my area of expertise, in order to make this an entirely representative resource, lesson plans for all outcomes would need to be completed prior to the full implementation of this curriculum.

In conclusion, even when considering the potential drawbacks and difficulties that have been identified, I do feel that this project was a huge success. Though challenging and exhausting at times, my dedication and perseverance allowed me to reach my goal of creating a variety of lessons for the intermediate grades and resulted in a collection of effective and useful resources to support each lesson. The resource that I have developed can be used as a broad curriculum covering many topics, or lesson by lesson covering individual themes depending on teacher preference and need. It is thorough, unique and able to be implemented in the classroom immediately. My work provides a necessary resource for teachers in British Columbia, a handy reference tool for all educators who are exploring concepts related to digital literacy, and a starting point for those who are planning to use technology in their classrooms.

Recommendations

As the development and testing phases of this project have now come to a close, there are a number of specific recommendations that I would suggest for the further development and implementation of this project.

Though these lesson plans were created for the purposes of a master's project, in reality the creation of such a resource hub would be completed under a contractual agreement with the Ministry of Education or a specific school district. It has been noted that the process of creating numerous activities, searching out many additional resources and seeking ways to approach each

outcome from various different angles would take a substantial amount of time. Therefore, in order to ensure the creation of a truly comprehensive resource for the benefit of all B.C. educators, more time and energy would need to be allocated to the development of each specific lesson plan and numerous user groups should also be consulted during the planning and development phases. In all likelihood, this support team of educators and technology experts would collaborate and spend a number of days researching and developing each individual lesson plan, creating activities that would reach a variety of different needs and grade levels in multiple ways. I recommend that the existing project and lesson plan template be used as a guide in the further development of a resource hub tied to the Digital Literacy Framework.

Though a lot of effort and creativity was put into the development of the website that houses my project, my skills in website creation are still somewhat limited. I envision a much larger website with links to entire pages for each topic that then include references, additional resources and outlined lesson plans on each page, as opposed to a .pdf file attached to a list of outcomes. The website I created is informational in that it outlines the process and product of my master's degree project. Therefore it was set up in a fairly straightforward and consistent manner. I did not require flash or fluff for the purposes of this project and so did not concentrate my efforts on making the website overly showy, but I initially envisioned the finished product to be much more dynamic, with multiple media options, embedded videos, numerous links to follow and exciting graphics that would draw the user in. Even though I see my website as being well laid out, easy to use and esthetically pleasing, I recommend collaborating with experts in the web design field in order to complete the work.

Further, though a good start has been made in developing digital literacy lessons within the scope of this project, a number of outcomes remain unrepresented in my work. Due to my

experience and interest in the grade 4-6 range and time constraints for the completion of the project, I chose to focus my efforts primarily on intermediate outcomes. The 1-3 and 10-12 grade levels, though briefly touched upon in some lessons, still have a number of outcomes that require research and lesson plan development for the project to cover all aspects of digital literacy. In order to create the comprehensive resource initially outlined in my project proposal, I recommend that work continue on the development of lesson plans for all of the outcomes and grade levels contained within the Digital Literacy Framework.

Additionally, the resources gathered for each outcome here represent only a small fraction of those available to educators online. Numerous companies, ministries and organizations are helping to create awareness of digital literacy issues and promoting digital citizenship ideals on their own websites. As new resources are developed, lesson plans will need to be continually created, adapted and updated in order to consistently meet the needs of this digital generation. Just as there are many ways to solve an equation or find the answer to a problem, lesson plans could also be developed to reach each outcome in many alternative ways. There is a huge potential here to partner with companies and user groups to develop new and exciting resources and lesson plans to accompany them. It is recommended that connections be made to numerous user groups in order to co-develop and share resources and lesson plans. This will help to ensure that a consistent standard of digital literacy education is reached province wide and, potentially, nationwide.

Based on feedback collected during the peer review process, a number of minor adaptations to the project itself were also identified. A title block and a 'Required Resources' section where materials that are needed in the lesson could be listed will need to be included on the lesson plan template and all existing lesson plans will need to be updated to include that

information. Links on the website will need to be regularly checked to ensure each resource is still active and fixed as necessary. Each file will need to be modified so that it opens into a new window for ease of use, and picture attributions need to be made at the bottom of each page on the website. Copyright permissions will also need to be posted for each lesson plan and for the website collection as a whole. It is recommended that these changes be made prior to publishing the site for use and as an ongoing measure.

Once all of these conditions have been met, the project will also need exposure to be fully effective. I recommend that the Ministry of Education be made aware of the work already completed, and a partnership to promote the completion and distribution of the resource be formed. With the Ministry's guidance and funding, a more dynamic and comprehensive website could be crafted that is based on this work and the Ministry could also assist in the promotion and implementation of the curriculum in school districts across the entire province. I further recommend that links to the completed work be shared via multiple social media sites and groups so that educators across the country can make use of it.

On a personal note, I would also like to include two recommendations that could potentially increase my own expertise, as well as the overall value of my project for the school district in which I work. Initially, I would like to develop a presentation of my work to be shared at professional development sessions. This presentation would highlight the project and lesson plans that I have created and could be used to excite teachers about the potential uses of technology in education and help guide and encourage them through the process of effectively implementing it in their own classrooms.

During the testing and review phase it was also suggested that I write a book that included all of my lesson plans. Additional work developing further lesson plans to cover all of

the outcomes in the Digital Literacy Framework, as well as the development of further chapters to explain and support the importance of each section of the framework, would be required prior to a book being ready to print. However, I would love to see this collection published in print form to bring as a resource to school districts and teacher training sessions where I presented the aforementioned seminar. Though this may be somewhat redundant as it is a collection of online tools and should, therefore, remain online, I would love to join the ranks of being a 'published author' and would view that as being a huge personal, and professional, accomplishment.

The intent for this project was always that it would continue on after the completion of the coursework requirements for the MEDL program. The website and lesson plans that I developed suited my purposes for the scope and timing of this project, however, given additional time to research and develop further lesson plans, I believe that this project could become an indispensable resource for B.C. educators. By continuing to build upon this effective foundation to create a massive collection of tools and resources, my goal of helping to bring digital literacy skills and digital citizenship awareness into the classroom would be achieved.

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Appendix A – Lesson Plan Template

Digital Citizenship Lesson Plan

Title

General Topic (as defined in the Digital Literacy Framework)	

Applicable Grade Range

Outcome(s) to be Addressed

Importance / Significance of Lesson

Duration

Overview

Required Resources

Lesson Plan and Extension Activities

Adaptations

Additional Resources

Cross-curricular Outcomes Also Addressed

~developed by Kristin Sward, 2014