

Assignment 2: Problem Identification

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Introduction

Digital literacy is an important skill for students to develop and master in today's technology based world. The new British Columbia (B.C) curriculum includes the integration of digital literacies and technology skills in addition to the core curricula of each course. According to the B.C. Government (n.d.), "all students must have regular opportunities to use technology to develop skills that encourage personal productivity, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration in the classroom and in daily life. As a newer Science teacher, I have been focusing on lessons revolving around core content and as I have started to refine my teaching practices, I would like to find ways to integrate technology into my course as well. Bates (2015) states that "content and skills are tightly related and as much attention needs to be given to skills development as to content acquisition to ensure that learners graduate with the necessary knowledge and skills for a digital age". Through integrating technology into my Science classroom, my students will have a chance to also develop the digital literacy skills that they will need to be successful once they graduate.

Statement of Problem

Currently, in my Biology unit, I assign the students a project that involves researching previous diseases, including their history, symptoms, spread of transmission and cures, and then the students create their own deadly disease using the information they have gathered. There is an aspect of digital literacy skill development in the current iteration of this project, as I introduce the project with a lesson on finding appropriate sources of information and learning how to reference those sources accurately. However, this project is fairly static as they simply

do the research and then submit the information on either a poster or through PowerPoint. It does not allow for students to interact with the content in a way that is more in line with how they access information on a daily basis, nor does it teach them any digital literacy skills other than how to reference and source academic information.

Using the current coronavirus epidemic, I would like to adapt this project to include investigating how the spread of information happens through social media and how to determine what could be considered 'fake news'. I would also like to make this project more collaborative by having the students create a blog with the information they have researched. Through an online community they can see other student's ideas and learn how to appropriately comment and interact with their peers online. This blog will also allow for the integration of different forms of media such as videos, infographics, text and hyperlinking to appropriate articles.

Conclusion

Through the use of blogs, I would like to revamp my current Biology assignment to allow for students to not only learn about infectious diseases but also to increase their digital literacy skills. This would change the static structure of a simple research project to a more interactive and collaborative assignment that teaches the students the skills needed to be successful in the current digital world. They will learn to question the validity of information that is spread on social media, to question the source of information and to disseminate their own information in an authentic and collaborative way.

References

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