DIGITAL LITERACY AND GENERATION Z
THE UNPACKING OF EXPECTATIONS

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Welcome

My spiritual home is a place in New Zealand called Akatarawa. It is framed by the Taraua ranges and the Akatarawa river runs through the ranges.

- When our family home was sold this year – 5 generations of our family had lived there

My first ancestor arrived in New Zealand with the Merchant Navy.

I identify as Pakeha

I currently live in Palmerston North,

- Manawatu Region, in the North Island

My family name is Tyacke

My name is Vicki-Lee

Welcome, welcome, welcome

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION
Employed in the tertiary sector in New Zealand
PhD Student
  Curtin University School of Education
The digital literacy of New Zealand secondary school students and their level of digital preparedness for tertiary studies.
An exploratory case-study research design
  Mixed methods: Surveys, online learning packages, focus groups
Develop an understanding of the meaning of digital literacy for Year 13 Biology students
Data has been collected from New Zealand secondary schools, and tertiary institutions in New Zealand
Focus: The participants’ knowledge of digital literacy and the interplay between the secondary and tertiary sectors in New Zealand.
Western Cultural Construct

- Age cohort – approx. 1997 to 2015

- A connected generation – internet, sophisticated digital devices, each other

- Digital devices – “run as an appendage or extension of their very identity” (Gabel, 2017, ¶7)

- Technology centric lifestyle

- Omnipresent personal digital device
All generations are impacted by technological advancements

- Baby boomers – wireless radio
- Gen X – television age
- Gen Y – personal computers
- Gen Z – no pre-internet reference point
  (McCrindle Research, 2012)

Each generation has its own distinct characteristics for how they embrace and use the developing technologies
Rate of digital integration – largest generation gap in our history (Leibler, 2018)

Significant differences created by lifestyle and/or period effects

Rapid change in cultural norms – impacts collective lifestyles

Popular media – navigating the challenges between parents and children (Fyers & Walters, 2017; Pearson, 2017)
Digital Natives

- Immersed in digital culture – no reality outside of the internet
  (Prensky, 2001)

- Digital integrators – integrated technology seamlessly

- Permeates all aspects of their being

- Instruction guides are not required – intuitive process

- Communication – post literate community and brevity is essential
  (McCrindle Research 2018)

DIGITAL INTEGRATION
Digital proficiency is being able to understand, select and use technologies and technological systems (Wenmoth, 2015)
The cognitive or intellectual competencies, which include being able to read, create, evaluate and make judgements while applying digital proficiency (Wenmoth, 2015)

The broader capacity to participate in a society that uses digital communication technology in workplaces, government, education, cultural domain, civicspaces, home and leisure spheres (Hoechsmann & DeWaard, 2015, p.4)

Linking of digital capacities to offline outcomes

Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society (UNESCO, 2004)
Used interchangeably with ICT Fluency, Digital Literacies, Digital Competence, Digital Citizenship

High level of engagement that is achieved when individuals are comfortable in using digital knowledge and digital skills.

The ability to reformulate knowledge and produce information to express oneself creatively and appropriately in a digital environment (Myers & Sundaram, 2013, p.409)

Being able to apply digital technologies to fulfil a certain purpose without difficulty

The link between digital engagement and offline outcomes (Park, 2017)
DIGITAL EXPECTATIONS

Popular Media
- Generation Z is starting university – but is higher education ready (Povah & Vaukins, 2017)

Scholarly Media
- Engaging Gen Z (Cook, 2015)
- Net generation or Digital Natives: Is there a distinct new generation entering university (Jones, Ramanau, Cross & Healing, 2010)
- Continuous revision and evolution of pedagogy
- Significant change in the landscape for Gen Z
- Is a new approach to educational theories required?
LEARNER PROFILING

- Homogenous perspective
- Learner assumptions based on generational membership

- Generational differences are myths being purported by researchers and popular media
- Wide range of evidence explaining generational differences without critical analysis of how these differences have occurred
  
  (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015)

- Gen Z’s connectedness is visible and we tend to categorise the digital abilities of Gen Z based on what we see
- Gen Z live in a hyperlinked world as confident uses of digital technologies, digital integrators and technologically literate

  (Wilhelm & Tedmon, 2018).
Throughout history there have been many “tools” to support literacy development
- Egyptian Hieroglyphs – Hieroglyphs Literacy?
- Scrolls – Scroll literacy?

Subskills
- Phonological awareness, phonics, comprehension, fluency and vocabulary
- Digital proficiency

New Zealand Context
- Literacy levels of New Zealanders is of significant concern
- Longstanding Socio economic gap (Education Central, 2017)
- 2017 - 40% of New Zealand adults have functional literacy concerns (RadioNZ, 2018).
- 2008 – 40% of the New Zealand working population were below the minimum level required (NZ Herald, 2008)

THE CONCERN IS...
“Students today can’t prepare Bark to calculate their problems. They don’t know the technology when they’re in school.”

“Students only use clocks to tell time, not to use a pencil. But a pencil is made from wood.”

1988 – Apple Classroom-

“Computers give students an advantage. Therefore, teachers should teach students how to use computers to and not to create displays will be a sad commentary on modern education.”

(Trending Education, 2017)
Rapid integration of digital technologies in education has changed the education landscape. Gen Z are digital integrators and all other digital users, including Gen Y are digital migrators (Prensky, 2001). Non-digital natives are teaching digital natives, educators are using a pre-digital language to educate a digital speakers (Cornu, 2011). Language differences between educator and learner is not a new phenomenon. Educators and Learners bring to education their cultural capital and their understanding of digital technologies and their level of digital literacy. Literacy is multifaceted and a longstanding concern. The unpacking of the expectations is complex and the interplay of their life cycle, period and the cohort effects will continue to contribute to the complexities.
QUESTIONS?


