



Digital Literacy Framework: General Learning Disability

Achieving Curriculum Targets using Digital Literacy: General Learning Disability

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Background and Overview

The *Digital Literacy Framework: General Learning Disability* outlined below was developed by the Special Education Support Service (SESS) in 2013-14 as part of its response to The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy.

The main aim of the project was to develop a structure for teachers whereby students with General Learning Disability (GLD) would be supported in accessing the curriculum through digital technologies, such as tablets, Apps, and mobile devices.

The *Digital Literacy Framework: GLD* is for teachers of students with Moderate, Severe and Profound levels of GLD who are not literate in the conventional sense.

The main focus was on the Moderate, Severe and Profound levels of GLD, where students are not literate in the conventional sense.

An associated *Template for Curriculum Planning and Assessment* was also developed to help teachers in using the *Digital Literacy Framework: GLD* to help students achieve curriculum targets.

The project had three main phases:

1. An exploration of the twin concepts of 'Literacy' and 'Digital Literacy' as relevant to students

with Moderate, Severe and Profound GLD who may not communicate or have literacy in the conventional sense.

2. The development of a *Digital Literacy Framework* and associated *Template for Curriculum Planning and Assessment*.
3. The development of CPD and support structures for teachers on the use of the *Digital Literacy Framework: GLD*.

Concepts of 'Literacy' and 'Digital Literacy'

The concept of 'literacy' for students with GLD

The concept of 'literacy' has different meanings in general. For example, the New South Wales Dept. of Education and Training (2010) described it as "... a moving target, continually changing its meaning depending on what society expects literate individuals to do." (p. 4)

Understandings of literacy, for example, range from the ability to read and write to more expansive and conceptual understanding such as the capacity to create and communicate meaning.

A number of documents produced by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) help to construct an understanding of literacy suitable for this context. For example, '*Literacy in Early Childhood and Primary Education*' (NCCA, 2012) referred to role of literacy in the construction of meaning and its importance "in empowering the individual to develop reflection, critique and empathy, leading to a sense of self-efficacy, identity and full participation in society." (p. 10).

The NCCA further outlined the role of non-linguistic representation, in a range of modalities, as key

Literacy encompasses concepts such as the construction and representation of meaning in multiple ways, leading to fuller participation.

elements in a definition of literacy:

"Since the use of a range of modalities to make and express meanings (multimodality) is seen as a key aspect of early learning, a definition of literacy for young children must be one that encompasses the various modes of representation, including non-linguistic ones" (p. 41).

Therefore, for students with Moderate, Severe and Profound GLD, literacy encompasses concepts such as the construction and representation of meaning in multiple ways, leading to fuller participation.

The development of tablet technologies – such as the iPad and Apps – simplifies the integration of multi-modalities such as images, sounds, text and tactile use.

The concept of 'digital literacy' for students with GLD

The expression of 'digital literacy' is similarly used with various meanings. These range from a range of technical skills to operate digital devices – 'operational definitions' – to more conceptual

understandings which include the assembling and processing of information ('meaning making'), the expression and representation of meaning, and fuller participation in society.

The concept of 'participation' seems particularly important for these students as there is a risk of being left behind, disadvantaged and excluded by the 'digital divide' in an ever-developing digital world.

SESS Definition of Digital Literacy for this Context
'The creation, communication and interpretation of meaning through multimodal digital formats, leading to fuller participation'

Drawing on these concepts of literacy and digital literacy, SESS defines 'Digital Literacy' as follows for the purposes of this project.

'The creation, communication and interpretation of meaning through multimodal digital formats, leading to fuller participation'

The development of the *Digital Literacy Framework: GLD and Template for Curriculum Planning and Assessment* was designed with the following objectives in mind:

- To augment teachers' and students' 'toolkits'
- To give students meaningful and enjoyable access to the curriculum
- To enhance students' participation
- To fit into teachers' methodologies, resources and routines

Digital Literacy Framework: GLD

The *Digital Literacy Framework: GLD* developed for this purpose is adapted by SESS from *The Basic Elements of ICT Digital Literacy* (State of California, 2010, p. 5) which claimed that its basic elements were 'globally accepted' (p. 5). The same framework appears in UNESCO's policy statement on Digital Literacy (UNESCO, 2011).

The framework is not intended to be strictly sequential – students will have different strengths and the levels of support, and scaffolding will vary between students and curriculum targets.

Additionally, some of the framework's six elements will only apply to specific curriculum targets. Therefore, it can be seen as a 'road-map' or a gateway tool, and needs to be reinterpreted in practice by teachers' professional beliefs and individual styles of practice.

SUMMARY OF DIGITAL LITERACY FRAMEWORK: GLD		
Framework Elements	Definitions	Competencies Summary
Access	Knowing about and knowing how to collect and/or retrieve information.	Search, find, and retrieve information in digital environments; have basic functional knowledge of digital artefacts – input and output.

Manage	Applying an existing organizational or classification scheme.	Conduct a rudimentary and preliminary organization of accessed information for retrieval and future application.
Integrate	Interpreting and representing information - summarizing, comparing, and contrasting.	Interpret and represent information by using digital tools to synthesize, summarize, compare, and contrast information.
Collaborate	Using digital spaces for working together in learning, and learning about turn-taking and collaborating.	Collaborate, share, take turns when learning, accessing and using information in digital modes.
Create	Generating information by adapting, applying, designing, inventing, or authoring information.	Adapt, apply, design, or invent information in digital environment(s) to describe, express an opinion, or support a basic viewpoint
Communicate	Communicating information persuasively to meet the needs of audience(s) using an appropriate medium.	Communicate, adapt, and present information properly in its context (audience, media) in digital environments and for an audience.

A summary of the framework can be downloaded from these links:



- Click here for MS Word Version (1Mb) .
- Click here for PDF Version (40 KB)

Examples of the framework elements and how they related to curriculum targets can be downloaded from these links:

-  Click here for MS Word Version (1Mb)
- Click here for PDF Version (42Kb)

Template for Curriculum Planning and Assessment, supported by the Digital Literacy Framework: GLD

This template can be used by teachers to help incorporate the Digital Literacy Framework: GLD into regular curriculum planning and assessment. This can be modified for individual school's and teacher's needs. It contains elements of:



1. Curriculum Targets
 2. Attainment Progression
 3. Teaching Methodologies
 4. Digital Literacy Framework Levels
- Click here for MS Word Version (1.5 MB)
 - Click here for PDF Version (500Kb)

SESS Supports for Digital Literacy Framework: GLD

SESS has a two-hour workshop available for teachers and schools who would like to avail of support in implementing the Digital Literacy Framework: GLD- it is called '*Achieving Curricular Targets using Digital Literacy: General Learning Disability*'.

The content and outline of the workshop is available from the link below: it is available as an evening course from time-to-time (details on calendar) or can be requested as an in-school seminar through our Supports Scheme.

- [Click here for Workshop description and outline](#)
- [Click here for Calendar of Events](#)
- [Click here for Supports Scheme details and Application Form \(In-school Professional Development\)](#)

SESS Background Paper - Pending

References:

NCCA (2012). *Literacy in Early Childhood and Primary Education (3-8 years)*. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Dublin.

NSW (2010). *Literacy Learning and Technology*. State of New South Wales through the NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010.

State of California (2010). *Digital Literacy Pathways in California: ICT Leadership Council Action Plan Report*. California. Chief Information Officer, California ICT Digital Literacy Leadership Council Office of the California State Chief Information Officer, 2010.

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