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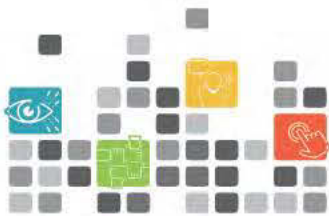
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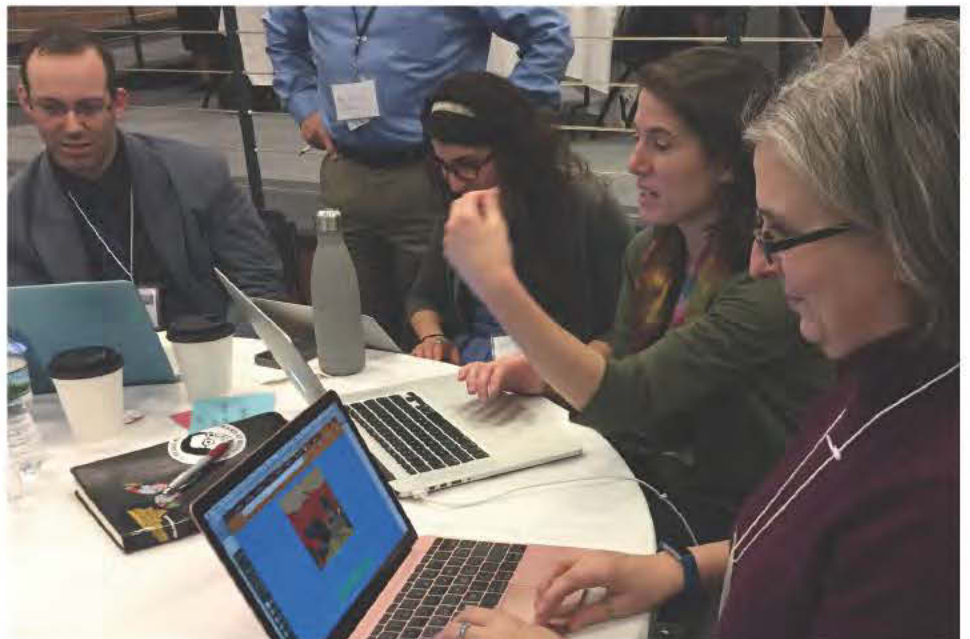


# Digital Literacy in Higher Education



media education lab

A Report from the  
University of Rhode Island  
Winter Symposium on  
Digital Literacy in Higher Education



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A Report  
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## Executive Summary

This report documents the key ideas that emerged from the Winter Symposium on Digital Literacy in Higher Education, a gathering of 56 higher education faculty held in January 12 – 13, 2017, including participants from the fields of education, communication and media, art and design, the humanities and social sciences, along with academic librarians and educational technology specialists.

In this report, we share insights that emerged from the program, where participants explored new models of professional development to advance knowledge, pedagogy and practice in digital literacy in higher education. The symposium's goal was to understand the challenges and opportunities regarding the future of digital literacy on college campuses, to determine what research needs exist in this area, and to brainstorm new approaches to professional development that may advance digital literacy in higher education.

Key ideas include:

- **Inspiring curiosity and interest in digital literacy.** Faculty are inspired by learning about the efforts of colleagues who have experienced success in using digital media and technology to advance student learning
- **Peer-to-peer sharing.** Informal sharing of “good practices” in virtual and face-to-face settings creates customized learning opportunities for faculty in a risk-free, non-commercial, no-pressure environment.
- **Building consensus through disciplinary dialogue.** When faculty gather in disciplinary teams to discuss the particularities of digital literacy within the subject area specialities, they share digital literacy practices that can be easily adopted by peers, thus facilitating the transfer of innovative pedagogies.
- **Big picture perspective.** A mix of faculty (from all 13 colleges and schools in Rhode Island along with faculty from 13 states and 3 countries) broadened faculty horizons and reminded faculty of our profound responsibilities to empower a new generation of students for life, careers and citizenship in an increasing digital and media-saturated society.

Throughout the symposium, participants recognized some critical needs for the future:

- **A broad political vision about why digital literacy matters.** Without a shared understanding of digital literacy, disciplinary silos will continue to contribute to uneven digital literacy implementation. A coherent and broad sense of importance must be linked to our concerns about the future of higher education and the role it serves in an increasingly global and mediatized society. Core value messages about improving learning may imbue all higher education constituents with the wherewithal to pursue digital literacy in college classrooms that extend beyond digitizing traditional practice and, instead, create deeper and more meaningful literacy learning for all.
- **New models of digital literacy professional development.** More and more faculty in higher education recognize the need to advance their own competencies in digital literacy and see the potential for how it may improve teaching and learning for students enrolled at colleges and universities. Because faculty independence is prized, professional development in digital literacy

cannot be mandated. Showcases, awards and recognition of best practices and formal and informal professional development can support peer-to-peer learning that gives faculty time for sharing and collaboration.

- **Social media networks that extend spaces for scholarship.** Networked scholarship is transforming faculty research, learning, and teaching. Faculty are increasingly turning to social media as spaces to build intentionally-designed personal learning networks, understand how to be networked learners, and uncover ways to model digital communication in their own teaching practices. Social media create ways for faculty to filter, curate, organize, and navigate information streams and need to be further investigated as ways of mitigated academic community building.
- **Support for critical thinking as part of digital literacy frameworks.** Digital literacy is inherently tied into critical understanding, critique, use, and assessment of digital tools and texts. Digital literacy is not a mere collection of skills for using technology. Instead, digital literacy is fundamentally an extension of literacy, in which access, analysis, evaluation and reflection are required, iterative practices that promote understanding, growth, and learning. Consideration of ethics, habits of mind, socio-emotional competencies and dispositions enable students to develop critical digital literacy competencies.

This report on digital literacy in higher education builds upon a peer-to-peer knowledge community (using the hashtag #digiURI) that has been exploring digital literacy in elementary and secondary education, school and public libraries, and in higher education institutions for four years.



## Introduction

The Winter Symposium on Digital Literacy in Higher Education was held in Providence, Rhode Island January 12 - 13, 2017. The authors acknowledge Jim Purcell, [Rhode Island Commissioner of Postsecondary Education](#) for providing financial support for the Winter Symposium on Digital Literacy in Higher Education. Thanks also go to David Byrd at the [School of Education at the University of Rhode Island](#) and Lori Ciccomascolo of the [Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies](#) for their support of the symposium.

The symposium included a mix of large and small group discussions, workshops, and time for networking and information sharing. Four broad themes were explored: the nature and types of digital literacy competencies, digital literacy pedagogies, the identity of the college faculty in an age of digital media, and the functions of scholarly networking as a form of professional learning.

The symposium was designed as an invitation-only event and participants included higher education faculty and others who were known to us through their scholarship, appearances at conferences, and online visibility through social networking including Twitter's #highered and other groups. Representatives from among the 13 colleges and universities in the state of Rhode Island were in attendance as well as faculty from 13 states and 2 countries. We recruited 56 individuals from the following fields:

- Arts and Design
- Education
- Communication and Media
- Humanities & Social Sciences
- Academic Libraries
- Information Technology

## Participant List

The participants helped to generate the ideas developed in this report and we are grateful for their active engagement, ideas and support. They include:

**Joseph Amante**, *Community College of Rhode Island*

**Lucile Appert**, *Columbia University*

**Emily Bailin Wells**, *Teachers College, Columbia*

**Jonathan Becker**, *Virginia Commonwealth University*

**Linda Beith**, *Roger William University*

**Jillian Belanger**, *University of Rhode Island*

**Ralph Beliveau**, *University of Oklahoma*

**Whitney Blankenship**, *Rhode Island College*

**Stephanie Branson**, *University of South Florida*

**Spencer Brayton**, *Blackburn College*

**Katelyn Burton**, *Fashion Institute of Technology*

**David Byrd**, *University of Rhode Island*

**Joshua Calkins**, *University of Rhode Island*

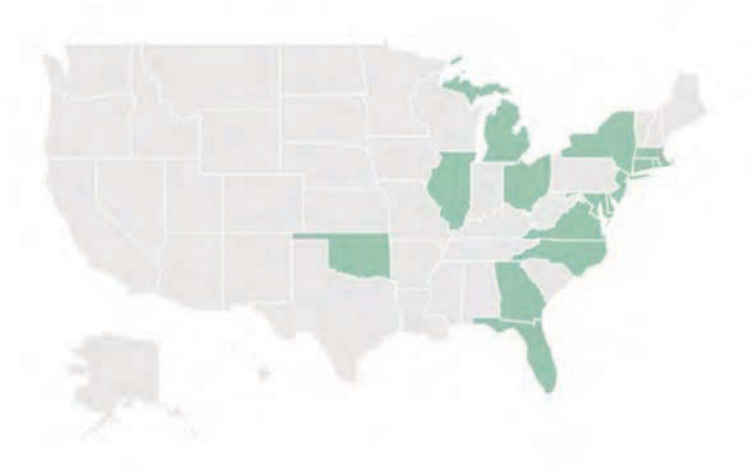
**Natasha Casey**, *Blackburn College*

**Amber Caulkins**, *College and University Research Collaborative*

**Lori Ciccomascolo**, *University of Rhode Island*  
**Julie Coiro**, *University of Rhode Island*  
**Alec Couro**, *University of Regina, Canada*  
**Jane Cabbage**, *Bowie State University*  
**Terry Deeney**, *University of Rhode Island*  
**Kelly Donnell**, *Roger Williams University*  
**Wendy Drexler**, *Johns Hopkins University*  
**Peggy Finucane**, *John Carroll University*  
**Jay Fogleman**, *University of Rhode Island*  
**Yonty Freisem**, *Central Connecticut State University*  
**Lareese Hall**, *Rhode Island School of Design*  
**Donald Halquist**, *Rhode Island College*  
**Jeanne Haser**, *Rhode Island College*  
**Troy Hicks**, *Central Michigan University*  
**Renee Hobbs**, *University of Rhode Island*  
**Janet Johnson**, *Rhode Island College*  
**Sara Kadjer**, *University of Georgia*  
**Joanne Kehoe**, *McMaster University*  
**T. Mills Kelly**, *George Mason University*  
**Hannah Lee**, *University of Delaware*  
**Lu Hongyan**, *University of Rhode Island*  
**Lauren Mandel**, *University of Rhode Island*  
**Jon Marcoux**, *Salve Regina University*  
**Sandra Markus**, *Fashion Institute of Technology*  
**Eileen Medeiros**, *Johnson and Wales University*  
**Paul Mihalildis**, *Emerson College*  
**Mary Moen**, *University of Rhode Island*  
**Charles Morgan**, *Community College of Rhode Island*  
**Lisa Owen**, *Rhode Island College*  
**Hailey Posey**, *Providence College*  
**Jim Purcell**, *Rhode Island Commissioner of Higher Education*  
**Mohammad Raissa**, *University of Rhode Island*  
**Maria Ranieri**, *University of Florence, Italy*  
**Theresa Redmond**, *Appalachian State University*  
**Frank Romanelli**, *University of Rhode Island*  
**Cyndy Scheibe**, *Ithaca College*  
**Candice Simmons**, *Johnson and Wales University*  
**Sandra Sneezby**, *Community College of Rhode Island*  
**Kristen Turner**, *Fordham University*  
**Joyce Valenza**, *Rutgers University*  
**Clarissa Walker**, *University of Rhode Island*  
**David Wallace**, *Boston University*  
**Carl Young**, *North Carolina State University*  
**Mia Zamora**, *Kean University*



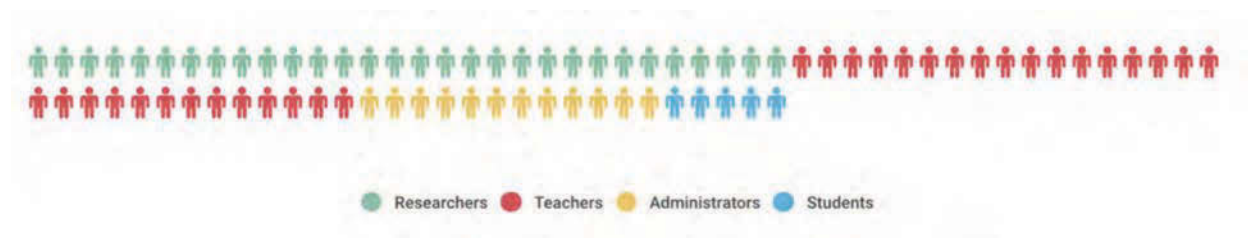
Figure 1  
56 Participants from 13 States and 3 Countries



The group was largely from the East Coast of the United States but representation from Canada and Italy helped provide some international context. Faculty affiliations were primarily public universities (N= 38) and private universities or colleges (N=18). Two were from community colleges, 1 was from a state department of higher education, and 1 was from a research institute.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Participating faculty include teachers, researchers, higher education administrators and students representing 50 colleges and universities, including public, private and community college institutions.



## **Keynote Address: Finding Your Path by T. Mills Kelly**

*By Mia Zamora, rapporteur*

*Hiking trails as a powerful metaphor for digital literacy*

Tasked with energizing a diverse group of educators across disciplines, **T. Mills Kelly**, Professor of History at George Mason University delivered the keynote address at the Winter Symposium on Digital Literacy in Higher Education at the University of Rhode Island. Formerly the associate director of George Mason's [Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media](#), Kelly has developed award-winning history website projects funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Professor Kelly led participants to think more deeply about the urgency of digital literacies in the context of higher education through the use of a meaningful metaphor of the nature trail or the nature path. As digital literacy is a vast and vexed discussion in the current landscape of 21st century education, the nature path metaphor helped people think through several questions when considering what digital literacy means for all of us:

- Do we mean the ability to use digital technologies to accomplish a particular task?
- Or does digital literacy mean being able to navigate the wilds of the Internet without being taken in by the false information floating around out there?
- Or does it mean the ability to create digital objects, code something useful, or develop visualizations of large corpora of texts?

Introducing himself to the group as a hiker, Mills Kelly drew on his considerable experiences on the Appalachian Trail, America's oldest and still most iconic long distance hiking trail, to answer such questions. Inspired by [Robert Moor's \*On Trails\*](#) (2016), Mills quoted: "To put it as simply as possible, a path is a way of making sense of the world. There are infinite ways to cross a landscape; the options are overwhelming, and pitfalls abound. The function of a path is to reduce this teeming chaos into an intelligible line."

As he discussed, if we think about digital literacy more as choosing a path through the mountains and less like trying to sail across the open ocean, then perhaps we have a chance to find a way forward as educators and as scholars in the teeming digital landscape. The notion of the boundless open ocean is indeed immobilizing. Just like that notion of the open sea, Professor Kelly pointed out that when it comes to digital literacy, there are just too many options, too many platforms, too many apps, too many new ways to navigate the Internet. Indeed at this critical juncture, this reality can certainly render educators lost at sea.

But Professor Kelly reminded us that we are not alone, that there are many educators who want to teach digital literacy from a diversity of disciplines, who want to improve their own skills in order to do so more effectively. In the end, Mills Kelly grounded participants with his insistence that rather than trying to define something so broad as "digital literacy," we instead should think of ourselves as practitioners on a continuum, who can decide "I'll just do this," or, "I'll just teach my students that." He asked us all to think in "steps" rather than grand visions that overwhelm.

He reminded us that if one can't see the destination, we need to remember to simply put one foot in front of the other, and blaze our own pathway while listening and learning along the way. When

it comes to thinking about digital literacy in our own practice as teachers, scholars, researchers, citizens, he put it rather succinctly: “Walk, see, but make sure you really see.”

## **Show Me Sessions: Hands-On, Peer-to-Peer Faculty Learning**

Faculty participated in an informal, elbow-to-elbow style learning experience for sharing ideas, research, programs and instructional practices. Many participants volunteered to share and learn from each other in two sessions during the day. Participants explored topics that included:

### **Instructional Practices**

- Creating videos to make explicit the theoretical connections between past and present perspectives on media, art, culture and society
- Tools, sites and exercises that help students to recognize data, sites or platforms that should be confirmed or interpreted.
- Creating robust online dialogue with asynchronous video
- Using digital storytelling in an elementary teacher education program
- How students compete in meme creation, hashtag creation and “Wikipedia racing“ to help re-imagine popular social technologies in more civic ways
- New text formats to document the search process: Creating a video anthology
- Augmenting library research with a webclipper, students incorporate sustained online grazing into their research projects
- Helping pre-service elementary teachers use digital tools to create literacy lessons and engage in coursework as they create a digital portfolio for future interviews

### **Course Development**

- Faculty and librarian collaboration on the development of a new course in media and information literacy
- Incorporating student media production activities into undergraduate and graduate education in digital literacy in education

### **Approaches to Professional Support**

- Introducing the multimedia design process (pre-production, production, and post-production) and presenting it in a library research guide for students
- Creating screencasts to help faculty and students make better use of the most common instructional technology tools
- Designing a seminar for students, faculty and staff to delve into the basics of digital literacy, data management, and open practices in research and scholarship
- Increase visibility for faculty innovation by recording and presenting brief video interviews with faculty who are using technology to enhance student learning.

## Four Themes of the Winter Symposium

Four thematic dialogues were developed to capture the complexity of digital literacy in higher education and each panel was moderated by one of the four co-directors of the symposium. Julie Coiro moderated the session on the digital literacy competencies of faculty, undergraduate and graduate students Renee Hobbs moderated the session on teaching and learning with and about digital media. Maria Ranieri developed and led the session on the digital identity of the college professor and Sandra Markus led the session on scholarly networking and digital literacy. These sessions provided time for intensive discussion among a small group of faculty whose insights are described below.

### PANEL 1. Digital Literacy Competencies of Faculty, Undergraduate, and Graduate Students

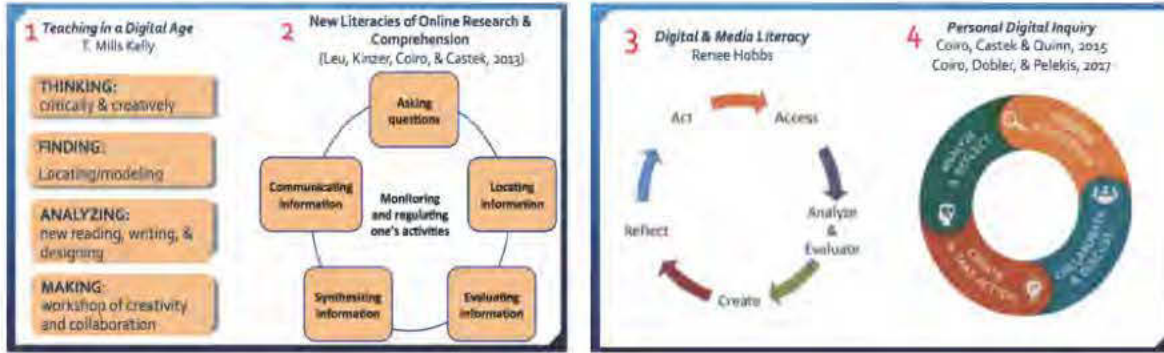
*Moderator: Julie Coiro*

#### Questions

- What are the knowledge, skills, practices, and mindsets of “digital learners” and “digitally literate faculty”?
- What do we want students to know, understand, and be able to do with digital texts and tools and why/to what end?
- Who is responsible for developing these?

**Process of Inquiry.** We used Sharpe & Beetham’s (2011) Digital Literacies Framework to help us brainstorm digital literacy competencies in four categories. These included conditions of access (availability of appropriate tools and Internet connections); basic skills needed to apply when learning with specific technology; flexible practices (where learners make informed choices about how to use technology, alone & with others in response to a specific content and set of goals); and personal attributes (an individual’s attitude and identity in relation to their learning with technology). The model assumes that student access can drive the development of digital skills, and over time, these use of these skills results in effective practices that enables students to begin to identify with attributes of a confident digital learner. Similarly, the down arrow suggests a student’s attitude towards technology provides motivation to learn new practices, develop new skills, and acquire access to digital texts and tools that meet their needs. To encourage a range of ideas, we shared four models of how others have begun to define teaching and learning in a digital age.





Next, participants took ten minutes to individually brainstorm what competencies were included in his or her own definition of digital literacy. Then, we reviewed our individual brainstorms as a group, discussed commonalities, and eventually moved individual ideas into categories of access, skills, practices, and attributes. Finally, we began to generate ideas for an action plan in each area, focused on how faculty could work collaboratively to enable these conditions of expertise and generate resources that served to build program/institutional capacity. Thus our hope was that a shared vision (even if not yet fully defined) could foster shared commitment and action toward a common set of expectations and standards. Although time was short for developing a complete action plan, there was lots of positive energy in our group and we realized the many ways we could benefit from the power of working collaboratively, even across institutions, to work toward these goals with our students.

**Insights.** Participants generated a list of digital literacy competencies by developing ideas about access, skills, practices and mindsets. For each, we considered some initial strategies we can take as faculty to enable conditions for developing these digital literacy competencies among students and faculty back at our institutions.

| DIGITAL LITERACY ACCESS   |
|---|
| <p>In today's world, most media use is digital, and even traditional media are often shared or accessed through digital technologies. Thus, digital media use requires access to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Infrastructure:</b> internet access, data plans/cloud storage</li> <li>● <b>Hardware:</b> mobile devices, digital media production tools such as cameras, smart phones,</li> <li>● <b>Software:</b> digital technologies/technology tools, apps/software,</li> <li>● <b>Education:</b> digital literacy education to achieve ease of use and fluency</li> </ul>  |
| ENABLING CONDITIONS TO INCREASE ACCESS  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communicate to students the minimum "technology" needed to be successful in your class/program</li> <li>● Develop mechanisms for communicating to students and faculty about the future needs and current resources already available at your institution or across institutions (create a common digital space to put and share all of these resources) and specify the range of internal or external supports available</li> <li>● Seek ongoing tech support (real people 24/7 especially for online courses on weekends, at night, etc.); using a digital FAQ list with screencast tutorials that are customized to user needs</li> <li>● Develop ways of supporting students who have physical access but don't have intellectual access (limited knowledge of knowing how to use and where to find help)</li> </ul> |

| DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Use the Internet as a tool for learning and communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understand underlying structure of how information is organized on the internet</li> <li>● Use to inspire questions</li> <li>● Locate information across multiple perspectives</li> <li>● Understand/Comprehend information across multiple perspectives, and assess the validity of digital sources</li> <li>● Manipulate digital texts (copy, annotate, share, remix)</li> <li>● Critically evaluate information                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Determine and justify information relevance</li> <li>○ Determine and justify information credibility</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Analyze and critique information and its sources</li> <li>● Synthesize information across multiple perspectives and modes</li> <li>● Represent what you've learned by using, creating, and sharing information</li> <li>● Use new information to take action and make a difference</li> </ul>   | <p>Use other digital tools for learning and communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demonstrate basic understanding of how to use tools, software, apps needed in a specific learning context and/or discipline</li> <li>● Save, attach/upload, and share digital files</li> <li>● Compare/contrast features of different digital tools and determine which most useful</li> <li>● Organize/manage digital information</li> <li>● Create things with digital tools</li> <li>● Communicate effectively on social media</li> </ul> |
| ENABLING CONDITIONS TO FOSTER DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create a website <i>across</i> institutions attending the symposium to start sharing ideas and tutorials</li> <li>● Curate a list of high quality basic tutorials - all available in one place (categorized or searchable by course, program, discipline, etc.)</li> <li>● Create time/provide/seek opportunities for faculty to discuss and share how and why they are using technology and how to foster/integrate digital literacy into teaching and learning (Teaching with Technology Community of Practice; Lunch &amp; Learns; Show Me Sessions)</li> <li>● Coordinate efforts with faculty across the program to build on these ideas and scaffold skill development across the curriculum</li> <li>● Ask leadership to provide some mechanisms to help faculty increase their own skills</li> <li>● Create a cycle of communicating what areas of needs you have, providing tutorials over time, and collecting/organizing discipline specific resources</li> <li>● Provide digital and live drop-in hours for students and faculty to get support in learning how to use technologies</li> <li>● Build this skill development into the early part of the students' curriculum through general education courses</li> </ul> |   |

| DIGITAL LITERACY PRACTICES  |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demonstrate fluent use of digital tools for teaching and learning</li> <li>● Demonstrate ability to look beyond the use of tools (aka ‘tinkering’) to consider the values, beliefs, and practices embedded within their use</li> <li>● Select and articulate how to use technology (or not use technology) in certain situations for certain purposes</li> <li>● Compare/contrast attributes and pros/cons of specific digital tools</li> <li>● Select and articulate how to digital tools appropriately for different communication tasks</li> <li>● Use and assess digital tools, supports, and processes in order to further knowledge, understanding, growth, and learning</li> <li>● Use tools purposefully for scholarly pursuits</li> <li>● Use digital tools collaboratively to build knowledge</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use technology to create digital artifacts that can be shared, consumed, and discussed with others</li> <li>● Demonstrate and apply/teach an awareness of ethical practices in using digital tools for learning and communication</li> <li>● Organize/Manage digital files; Create a pathway for personal learning by assessing and curating information in complex digital environment and understanding how to manage all that knowledge</li> <li>● Demonstrate an ongoing practice of critical evaluation, reflection, assessment, and pedagogical considerations</li> <li>● Apply tools, technologies, and critical appraisal skills in your daily digital practices and in your development as a digital scholar.</li> </ul> |
| ENABLING CONDITIONS TO IMPLEMENT DIGITAL LITERACY PRACTICES   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create “rewards/incentives” for faculty for creating things that influence practice</li> <li>● Create a repository of lesson plans with examples of teaching and student products</li> <li>● Expand the sharing beyond our single institutions to showcase (create an informal schedule of postings and encourage contributions across institutions)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Online pedagogies</li> <li>○ Face-to-face practices</li> <li>○ Blog posts</li> <li>○ Screencast tutorials</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |  |
| DIGITAL LITERACY MINDSETS   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Value the role of thinking as a component of technology use</li> <li>● Demonstrate a willingness to accept/appreciate change and an understanding that things will continually be different;</li> <li>● Value the process of learning how to learn and finding out how to do something</li> <li>● Appreciate that learning with technology is grounded in an ongoing process of inquiry and one’s own ability to create a pathway for personal learning by searching, assessing, curating information in a complex and often overwhelming digital environment</li> <li>● Value collaborative knowledge building and welcome opportunity to collaborate with others to manage all of the knowledge; it’s okay to ask people for help</li> <li>● Recognize and value contributions of students</li> <li>● Value and demonstrate flexibility, curiosity, collaboration, risk-taking, and appreciation of differences</li> </ul> |  |

- Demonstrate a willingness to take risks, to try and fail, explore, experiment with and adopt digital tools for teaching and learning
- Value the creation and dissemination of new knowledge in a variety of media formats
- Value and demonstrate self-awareness and reflection (public and private) about your own ability to use tools, technologies, critical appraisal skills in your daily digital practices and in your development as a digital scholar
- Value ethical reasoning in use of technology
- Pedagogical considerations:
  - We can teach specific tools or media but there is no guarantee they will remain relevant
  - Willingness to learn, experiment, with, and adopt new digital tools for teaching and learning.
  - Taking on new roles and enabling our students to be “equals” in the learning process
  - Thinking about how to collaboratively build knowledge with the use of technology
  - Understanding how to manage all that knowledge

#### ENABLING CONDITIONS TO FOSTER MINDSETS FOR DIGITAL LITERACY

- Modeling of these mindsets in our own practices - select one we could do better at and make attempts to express and model our efforts to “have this mindset”
- Departmental sharing that involves reflection about your own practices and next steps

## Panel 2. Teaching and Learning with and about Digital Media

*Moderator: Renee Hobbs*

### Questions

- What motivates faculty to use digital and social media for teaching and learning? What excuses or justifications are used by faculty who do not use digital media?
- What kind of pedagogies do digital media encourage? How do faculty learn to use these approaches? What are some instructional strategies that can be exemplars for colleagues in your discipline?
- What opportunities are currently available for faculty to share their experiences in using digital texts, tools and technologies for teaching and learning? How do institutional norms, policies and structures challenge or shape faculty innovation? What do faculty need in order to continue to advance their knowledge and skills in using digital media and technologies to support student learning?

**Process of Inquiry.** This group started by having general large group discussion about these questions and then participants moved into smaller conversational groups across three themes, sharing information and ideas in response to specific issues of faculty motivation, instructional practices and approaches to professional development. Then we attempted synthesis through a digital free-write activity where participants identified core ideas that emerged from the discussions. Excerpts from this writing is represented as “Faculty Voices.”



**Insights.** For innovation in digital literacy to gain traction in colleges and universities, we first need to better understand the complex motivations of faculty who are inspired to take action as well as those who are resistant to change. Then, we need to catalogue and classify the different instructional practices of digital literacy, looking at how they might be useful in different learning environments, like in a seminar, a lecture, a lab or in online learning. Finally, we need to take stock of the strategies for advancing faculty development efforts in institutional contexts, including a frank and candid assessment of “what works” and what is less effective.

### **Motivation & Resistance**

Participants recognized that digital literacy pedagogies are not currently seen as a typical expectation of college and university learning environments. They generally saw themselves as enthusiasts or at least “curious” about digital literacy in higher education. Participants described the most common motivational challenges they saw in themselves and their colleagues. They explained that many faculty experience:

- Fear (“I don’t want to be perceived as inexperienced”)
- Lack of time (“I’m already working to the limit of my calendar and so what will I *stop* doing to learn this new technology?”)
- Concerns about the loss of traditional academic competencies (“Students need to learn how to listen and take notes from a lecture”)

Many participants recognized the value of pointing out what’s not working to help faculty recognize there is a problem and how digital literacy could be part of the solution. Only when faculty admit that current approaches are less effective will they be inspired to try new approaches. For example, faculty can easily admit that students don’t engage in critical reading. Demonstrations of how digital annotation tools can be used to support students engagement in reading can be motivational if they are positioned as solving a worthy and important problem.

Participants did not see generational patterns of faculty resistance. Some older faculty are active innovators in digital pedagogy, and some younger faculty may lack fundamental skills. But participants recognized that faculty across career stages may have different sources of resistance. Research could help sort out the different motivations for digital literacy among both older and younger faculty and potentially identify differences that might also exist among faculty from different fields of study and areas of expertise.

### **Faculty Voices**

“Part of digital literacy is being open to and exploring what digital resources can help me or my students meet certain goals and objectives, as well as possibly solve problems or find answers to questions we may have. Tied to this is defining and being clear about what our philosophy of teaching and learning is, along with integrating digital literacy (and defining that as a part of this philosophy as well).”

“I think it all stems from motivation. The pedagogy and the faculty development-- or the desire for development-- won't happen until the motivation question is answered. It all comes down to our students. They are a reflection of faculty, and if they aren't being prepared for the workforce, then something needs to change. There's a lot of

fear--- especially with older faculty-- in dealing with change. How do we overcome this?"

### **The Motivational Power of Peer-to-Peer Engagement**

Many participants described their own experiences of acquiring digital media competencies through a meaningful real-world engagement with a peer. As one participant put it, "There is value in having a trusted friend or colleague who is slightly ahead of where you are in your digital learning." Examples from members of this group demonstrated that informal instruction, delivered at the point of need from a near peer, can be powerful. For example, simple digital literacy competencies, like learning how to create and upload a screencast, takes on new relevance when someone has a practice needs. When a faculty member needs to share information verbally to many people outside of a face-to-face experience, they will be motivated to create a screencast if they have assistance in learning how to do it. Participants wondered about how we could collect stories from faculty members who have had this form of informal digital literacy learning. We also explored how this peer-to-peer form of learning could be made more visible among members of an academic department or knowledge community.

**IDEA:** A college or university creates a digital "thank you" type bulletin board where faculty, staff and students offer thanks to people who have helped them learn new digital tools and instructional practices.

### **Student-Centered Support for Digital Learning**

While motivation is what leads faculty into exploring new approaches to pedagogy, students can be inspired to develop digital literacy competencies on their own. Access to digital resources along with active support from academic library staff can be a vital component of independent learning. One participant described the value of a multimedia design center, where students can check out a variety of digital tools to create media. For example, at the Vitale Digital Media Lab, in the Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania, there is a large assortment of multimedia equipment to help with presentations and assignments. Students, faculty, and staff can borrow equipment for both academic and personal use.

### **Respect for Disciplinary Norms**

Participants recognized that few instructional strategies can be exemplars across all disciplines and fields. After demonstrating a particular use of video-based discussion tools, one participant recalled hearing from a colleague in another department: "That will never work in my discipline."

Some participants noted that exemplars that are discipline-specific are easy on-ramps. Different departments have different levels of ability to enact digital pedagogies and different levels of commitment towards valuing digital literacy competencies. Assignments that are cross-disciplinary have the opportunity to make digital literacy more relevant and lasting for students, but also to help faculty find ways to talk across disciplinary boundaries. Digital literacy can be presented as a way to increase efficiencies. In some departments, for example, there will be a warm response to demonstrations of how digital annotation can help provide feedback to assist with grading.

The sentiment of the group was that when faculty can see valuable uses for digital media and technology in their own discipline, they will be more likely to invest the time and effort to acquire knowledge and skills. Here the concept of *near transfer* has value for faculty development: faculty benefit from seeing examples of digital literacy pedagogy that are similar enough to current instructional practices yet different enough to be considered an improvement.

***IDEA:** Digital literacy advocates work collaboratively to create programs to showcase innovative pedagogies at gatherings of disciplinary peers. Sessions are made accessible for those unable to attend. These are archived on department websites.*

### **Learning Out Loud**

Much academic work that students create is produced only for a grade. This instrumental view of student academic work is unlikely to cultivate the values needed for life in participatory culture. When students create work for a larger audience, they gain an appreciation of the gift of knowledge sharing. Pedagogies that emphasize openness, including writing in public, storytelling, service learning, community partnerships, etc. promote a sense of accountability and risk-taking while enabling new forms of expression and creativity that may also lead to the creation of new knowledge.

***IDEA:** Student work is showcased within and across departments to illustrate the value of creating content that is infused with scholarly values but also speaks to a wider audience.*

### **Focus on Learning Outcomes**

Faculty in some disciplines value an outcomes orientation, helping students see how various assignments and activities are aligned with leading to an internship, a job, a new way of thinking about the world. As we explored ideas about why developing digital literacy helps students achieve their personal goals, participants noted that students themselves generally do recognize the value of developing the soft skills they need for the world of employment (e.g., problem solving, ability to work in teams, tenacity and persistence). But faculty may need help in seeing the value of using digital media tools and pedagogies to gain knowledge or better understand a discipline or a problem within a discipline.

When digital literacy is framed in terms of student success, the overall theme is that this pedagogy empowers learners and increases their ability to manage their own learning processes. Digital pedagogies have the opportunity to empower students by giving them more control - more choice and voice - over the learning experience.

### **Time to Work Together**

Faculty meetings are filled with talk and ideally, this talk should lead to action that improves academic programs and teaching and learning. But what if faculty meetings became places when people spent time creating collaborative work? What if digital tools were used to help faculty talk and create together? Participants emphasized the need to provide new models of digital literacy practices integrated with good pedagogy.

#### **Faculty Voices**

Engaging faculty requires collaboration, both within the department and across disciplines. Sharing pedagogies and strategies reinforces student learning as well as helping faculty develop and strengthen their own skills.

“I have been feeling the need to create new models for this, like near-peer coaching at point of need. I am reflecting on how, with my own digital literacy learning, one person's suggestion/idea/modeling had dramatic and major impact on my work as a teacher and researcher. This informal instruction happened just when I needed it.”

Workshops don't work simply because it is too much information, too fast, with no time to really practice the skills needed. One to one time + incentive to get something done would work better.

Collaboration among faculty members in departments as well as across disciplinary lines is key. Working together will help facilitate change among reticent or reluctant faculty.

### **Learning Management Systems**

Faculty hold a wide range of perspectives on the use of learning management systems like Blackboard, Sakai, Coursera and others. Some participants were very happy with their experience using these platforms while others have moved beyond the “walled garden” to provide learning experiences on the open Internet, sometimes with and sometimes without the support of university administrators responsible for digital learning. In general, participants believe that, too often, the use of learning management systems is considered a one-to-one proxy for digital literacy, thus reflecting a powerful misunderstanding of the differences between technology integration and digital literacy. Use of a learning management system does not prepare students well for creating and sharing digital content on the open Internet. One participant noted that advocates for digital literacy in higher education should avoid reproducing the status quo practices of higher education learning, where technology is used simply to digitize existing practices of faculty, like passing out a syllabus, providing written documents, showing videos and taking tests. Digital literacy offers the opportunity to have students engage in creative and collaborative forms of expressing and sharing knowledge and these practices are distinctly different pedagogical approaches than transmission-oriented traditional approaches.

### **How Administrators Support Digital Literacy**

School leaders can increase faculty awareness of the “new norms” of quality that are emerging as innovation in digital literacy begins to take hold in colleges and universities. By showcasing important initiatives, benchmarking against the most innovative practices, and providing support for small steps forward, department chairs and academic leaders can provide external motivation for advancing digital literacy. Deans and provosts can make hiring people with digital literacy competencies to be a requirement for new positions.

Universities and colleges are, at heart, communities of learners, and all of us rely on our local, disciplinary and global academic communities to advance knowledge and increase learning through teaching, research and service. Participants recognized that explicit support by administrators is needed for innovative learning approaches to thrive, as they are built on an iterative cycle of experimentation and failure. Support for faculty throughout their own learning process is critical, since faculty isolation can limit innovation. Some participants recommended that administrators provide an online place that aggregates projects that faculty are working on so that they can find partners and raise awareness of the work going on at the institution.

### **Faculty Voices**

We need to include digital literacy knowledge/scholarship to be included in both employment calls and Tenure & Promotion. There is a certain amount of risk taking that is needed to embrace digital pedagogies, untenured faculty may be hesitant to

embrace these kinds of pedagogical and research strategies if it will work against them in the T&P process.

Sharing ideas, strategies to solve particular learning challenges, and seeing yourself as a lifelong learner who is willing to try new things even if they aren't perfect initially reconnects us to the community of learners that should exemplify higher education. It is important for students to see their instructor as a learner as well and as someone who will take chances. It makes the classroom a more collaborative space and certainly more exciting when both instructor and learner can offer their strengths in the learning process.

### **Panel 3. The Digital Identity of the College Professor & Higher Education Professional**

*Moderator: Maria Ranieri*

#### **Questions**

- How important is it that a college professor maintain a digital identity? Why are some faculty using digital media to develop their professional identity? What are the obstacles that can prevent other scholars from doing it?
- What are the professional and personal affordances and liabilities of digital identities?
- How do faculty manage, control and shape their online personas? What online strategies are used by some faculty and how does it impact on digital reputation?
- How do faculty navigate the increasingly blurred boundaries between personal and professional identities online?

**Process of Inquiry.** We started with a simple exercise titled “Approaching Digital Identity.” Participants were invited to google their name individually and analyze the results, looking at the number, typology (whether the information were associated to personal or professional life), authorship and consistency of the emerging profile. They reflect on their level of satisfaction with the results (whether participants liked the emerging profile as an individual, as a scholar, as both etc.). To go deeper in the reflection an excerpt from George Veletsianos (2013, p. 644) was collectively read:

I remember the exact moment when I decided to join Twitter and created a professional blog. I was reading chapter proposals for a book that I was editing and one proposal made such a big impression upon me that I decided to spend more time using these technologies outside of the courses that I was teaching. At first, I often struggled with the notion of public participation on social media, of “putting myself out there,” publishing draft ideas and sharing details of my professional and nonprofessional life that I assumed others would find incomplete, dull or irrelevant. In retrospect, the source of this struggle was partly the training and scholarly enculturation that I received during my graduate degree. This training, implicit as it may have been, highlighted the notion that researchers: (1) can be “scooped out of ideas” if they share ideas prematurely and (2) are experts, knowledgeable in their field of study, confident of their work and should present themselves as such.

After a short discussion, each participant was invited to write about their personal experience of creating a (non)professional online profile, focusing on motivations (why they decided to engage in

social scholarship), affordances, liabilities, strategies and implications. The texts were shared and commented upon. Excerpts from this writing is represented below as Faculty Voices. The panel concluded with a discussion on the two most significant affordances of having an online digital presence as a faculty member.

**Insights.** There are several reasons for considering digital identity as an important component of scholars' professional identity today. Engaging with online social scholarship entails extending professional networks, exchanging new concepts with colleagues, increasing scientific visibility, reaching a wider public, not exclusively the academic one, supporting open circulation of new ideas, developing new ways to interact with students. However, building and maintaining online presence requires the ability to manage a public profile and keep it updated which is a highly time consuming activity.

### **Just Be, Just Network: The Phenomenology of Social Scholarship**

For some participants, the process of engaging with social scholarship is normal. All activities related to teaching, research and scholarly communication have to do with managing social platforms to perform the professional practice of being a scholar. Professional identity takes shape through social media and within the networks which are perceived as the real place where scholarship may happens today.

#### **Faculty Voices**

"I was just reviewing a prezi I made for the 2013 Summer Institute on Digital Literacy about my journey into social media engagement. In it, I broke my journey down into three stages, which, honestly, was probably because the template I chose on prezzi had three little hills conveniently built into it.... At any rate, they went like this:

Stage 1: I won't go and you can't make me.

Stage 2: I begrudgingly go.

Stage 3: I like it! I really do!

I didn't quite finish this thought because I started tweeting about it! :-)"

### **Collaboration, Open Access and Public Engagement**

Many participants agreed that main affordances of being a digital scholar are the opportunity to collaborate with peers, the possibility to engage with public discussion, the access to a wider public and also the sharing of open access contents and information. Being a digital scholar seems to be more and more linked to the concept of open and networked scholarship, where the added value of cultivating a digital presence relies on the participation in a community.

#### **Faculty Voices**

"For me, the choice to engage in social media began over a decade ago, while still in graduate school at Michigan State University. The first entry for my blog was in 2006, at the National Writing Project (NWP)-sponsored Tech Matters advanced institute, and my first tweet was in May 2007 (also at an NWP-related event). In a sense, the growth of social scholarship in the past decade has mirrored my own journey. I've always lived in the world that leaned toward

open-access, collaboration, and public engagement, and I have grown my network exponentially over my past 10 years at Central Michigan University.”

### **Maintaining and Extending Contacts and Blurring Boundaries**

Social network sites (SNS) are relevant tools through which faculty members build their digital presence. One of their main characteristics is that they support the maintenance of pre-existing and new relationships which can develop at the intersection of different contexts such as personal and professional life, private and public space, academia and the public. Therefore being a digital scholar seems also to mean overcoming the rigid boundaries of disciplines, the impenetrability of institutions, the distinction between academic and pop culture.

#### **Faculty Voices**

“The greatest possible community for the ideas that I am interested in fall between academia and the public. I decided to get involved with online as a way to maintain contact with people who had interests in fairly obscure areas of culture...but really only obscure in an academic context (like the way kids (adults?) try to keep their social media world compartmentalized). So developing a digital identity came naturally with the growth of the net over time.”

### **Faculty Members as Individual Broadcasters**

A very powerful image was the faculty as individual broadcaster. Open path to publishing extends and amplifies the opportunity to reach a wider public, but at the same time this requests individuals to be able to appropriately address their public. With the losing of intermediate filters, the capacity of presenting themselves through accurate processes of impression management becomes of fundamental relevance. Said differently, in the disclosed and hybridized world of social network sites we should all develop a sort of “broadcast literacy”.

#### **Faculty Voices**

“The decision to create a public profile started in the early days of web development. The opportunity to self-broadcast, which prior to the advent of the web was limited to closed publishers, was empowering and revolutionary. Closed paths to publishing were split open and the average person now had the ability to express themselves worldwide, without the filter of a corporation. Today, I believe that we need to see ourselves as individual broadcasters and all that goes along with doing that, and it is vital that we teach students how to be responsible, ethical and skillful in that ability to prepare them for the world we live in and what is to come”.

### **Updating Digital Identity: A Time Consuming Activity**

Many participants underlined that the proliferation of social media platforms entails the multiplication of personal digital profiles. Being online risks becoming a time consuming activity of updating lists of publications in ResearchGate or Academia.edu, slides on Slideshare, and so on. Some scholars clearly

prefer not being on the social networks rather than being online with an old profile including inaccurate contents. A digital identity hub would be a solution.



## Panel 4. Scholarly Networking and Digital Literacy

*Moderator: Sandra Markus*

**Process of Inquiry.** Participants explored ideas around building personal learning networks, learning how to be a networked learner and how we model this in our own teaching practice. Through participating in a virtual chat with scholars from around the world, they also discussed how we filter, curate, organize and navigate information streams, and how networked scholarship is transforming scholarship, learning and teaching.

**Insights.** Faculty, scholars and researchers are connecting, communicating, collaborating and learning with one another through virtual connections and social media platforms--blogs, websites, social bookmarking sites and twitter among others. Building a personal learning network is increasingly shaping how we network with colleagues and extend our scholarship. Digital tools can also help manage the deluge of information and ideas to help streamline our efforts as lifelong learners.

### Virtually Connecting

To guide our conversation about scholarly networking, participants were joined by a panel of scholars associated with the @VConnecting network. Virtual participants included Mahi Bali, Autumn Caines, Helen DeWaard, Rebecca J. Hogue, Nadine Aboulmagd and Apostolos Koutropoulos. Virtually Connecting is a group of global scholars and academics, who due to a variety of reasons (financial, caretaking responsibilities) cannot attend conferences. They participate and contribute to the conference virtually, with the support of onsite buddies (who facilitate the technical aspects of connecting onsite).

The concept of virtual connecting, which expands our conversations beyond the physical walls of the conference, is an important one. Sharing our ideas and visions globally is now more important than ever, digital media helps support academic networks that reach across our physical boundaries and connect to colleagues in higher education around the globe. By partnering with @VConnecting, we expanded the conversation, and explored the praxis of scholarly networking.

### Personal Learning Networks

Several the faculty expressed the idea that building a personal learning network was a necessity for them, as many faculty experience a sense of isolation at their own educational institution. Building a personal learning network is seen by participants as an intentional act designed to support lifelong learning. In exploring the differences between communities and networks, participants



recognized that the concept of *community* implies a deeper, richer relationship built around a project or purpose, driven by interest or needs, while a *network* has a looser association among members with fewer personal connections.

### **Managing the Flood of Content**

Curating and filtering information are an important aspect of scholarly networking. Participants use a range of digital tools to curate information – Flipboard, Twitter, RSS feed, and Feedly were mentioned by participants. Understanding how to use tools strategically in ways that support deep learning is a critical skill in the networked environment.

Participants suggested that faculty use of personal learning networks be explicitly modelled in the classroom, to increase transparency about how experts learn. By modelling networked learning, we sharing ourselves as learners (not necessarily as the “expert”). As Paulo Freire noted, “I cannot be a teacher without exposing who I am.” Networking provides a space for ongoing learning, every minute of every day.

## **RAPPORTEUR COMMENTS**

### **Key Themes and Insights Gained**

*By Mia Zamora*

Today’s complex digital landscape has been critical game changer for how we learn, how we teach, and how we educate in the 21st century. And yet, how effectively have we adjusted to such remarkable and swift change? What educational transformations have (or haven’t) occurred in the face of this digitized and networked reality?

The Winter Symposium on Digital Literacy in Higher Education at the University of Rhode Island set out to address such questions. A special gathering of higher education scholars and teachers convened to explore the urgency of digital literacy in the 21st century. From across countries and several states, faculty gathered to address this shift and grapple with what digital literacy pathways might make the most sense during such a sea change for education and learning as a whole. Consisting of a series of workshops, panels, working group discussions, a keynote talk, and “show me” sessions, the Symposium brought together a variety of people from different disciplines and career stages in order to explore this crucial conversation. Participants were encouraged to think about their understanding of digital literacy from various points of identification as teachers, scholars and researchers, as university faculty members, and as citizens.

**Advocacy Matters.** With this diversity of perspectives embraced, an important symposium theme to emerge was the question of advocacy. How do we learn to advocate for digital literacy? It became clear that digital literacy advocacy might span different facets of an educator’s personal identity. Faculty recognized their needs as a teacher seeking to “skill-up” and as a leader designing university-wide initiatives. Some identified needs as citizen activists or as public intellectuals. This multi-faceted understanding of professional identity in thinking about the challenges of digital literacy fueled a more rich and complex professional development experience for everyone involved. There was also dynamic discussion about the challenges of on-boarding reluctant faculty colleagues and the challenges of the silo-effect while working on these issues in institutional isolation. In addition, we thought together about how to achieve better faculty buy-in regarding the necessity and urgency for digital literacy resources and support in higher education. It soon became clear that digital literacy

cannot be summed up as simply the acquisition of skills necessary to use current digital tools. Digital literacy most certainly amounts to much more. Digital literacy must also be understood as a body of practices, values, and dispositions that transform how we learn collectively.

**Collaboration is Crucial.** Another key theme to emerge throughout the Winter Symposium was the importance of collaboration. Both cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional practices of connection can become a model for networked learning practices overall. In addition, there was a focus on the importance of building more participatory cultures and participatory practices in both our pedagogy and our research. In turn, building new forms of connected community became a key point of shared reflection. With the idea of connected and networked learning in the foreground, our conversations also turned to the recognition of a new forms of social scholarship, which might move beyond old disciplinary constraints to engage larger and more public audiences in inquiry and conversation.

**Face-To-Face as Learners.** Perhaps the most powerful takeaways from the Winter Symposium were the new connections made face to face, along with the acknowledgement of new models for learning in the digital age. In reflecting on the symposium experience, one participant wrote:

“One of the ideas that has emerged for me over our twenty-four hours together has not been overtly articulated, but rather implicitly felt and conveyed through dialogue and discussion. The idea is that we need-- as digital literacy advocates, teachers, leaders, and learners-- opportunities to connect face-to-face in *physical* space. Although we have a plethora of digital tools and networks at our fingertips through which we can engage, there is something irreplaceable about the immediacy and intimacy of our face-to-face learning together that ignites and inspires.

Another wrote:

Communities develop when there is face-to-face interaction. This symposium was so important for this reason, and it's something I will continue to think about as I create opportunities for teachers (and students) to connect. How can our virtual networks draw on and extend our face-to-face experiences?

The showcase of a variety of new learning communities and emerging methods for learning in the digital age (i.e. Virtually Connecting, Personal Learning Networks, and social action through public digital writing) were helpful in imagining a step forward. Although we might find ourselves at different stages of understanding, we are all positioned to grow together with new forms of digital knowledge production and by working together. In other words, people are at different places in their journey with digital literacy, but everyone needs to keep evolving, and that work must be done in collaboration. The Symposium was indeed a first step in actualizing that overall vision.

## What Faculty Want and Need



### Excerpts from the Flipgrid Discussion Board

**Jayne:** I need to discuss with my departmental colleagues about digital literacy and how it can be incrementally included in courses. They don't need to wait to use these practices in their classes.

**Mary:** I would like our department to set time aside to talk about digital literacy and how it looks in our practice. We need to create a culture of collaboration and sharing.

**Peggy:** I hope to change the conversation. Faculty development programs need to better focus on preparing people to think about how to integrate these competencies into the classroom.

**Linda:** I provide support and model instructional practices that enhance learning and engagement between students and faculty and across the community.

**Jillian:** I hope to equip my students with the tools and experiences that they need to find, evaluate, and communicate information - but I want to have fun and I want my students to be engaged and inspired and have fun while learning.

**Sandra:** I am going to use digital literacy concepts to train new faculty who will be teaching online.

## What Participants Learned

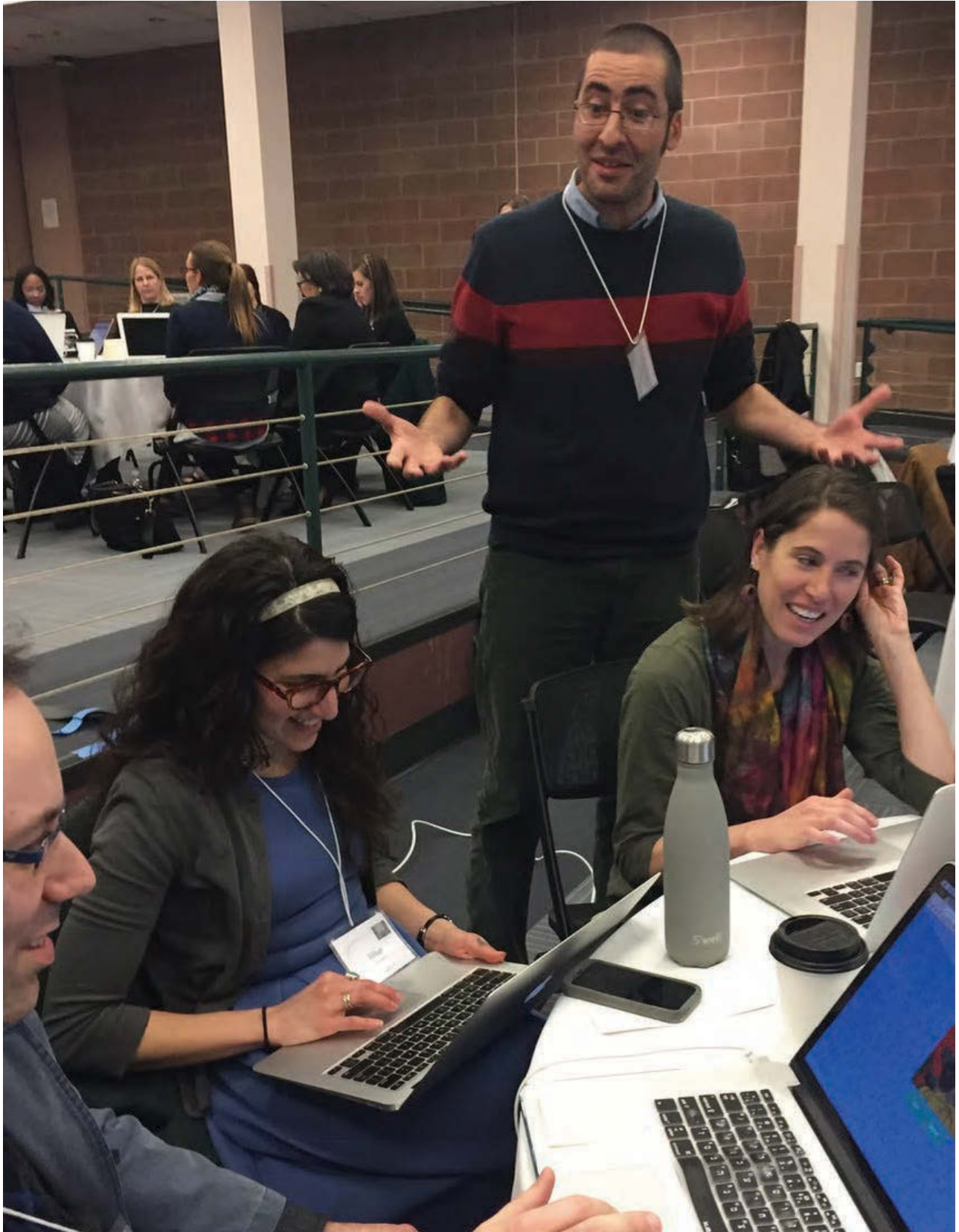
*From the post-event survey, we learned what participants took away from the program. Some examples of their reflections are shared below.*

### Broader Perspective

“What was really interesting to me was the diversity of definitions of digital literacy since I tend to see it from my own perspective. The broader scope was very helpful to me in expanding my own understanding of how this area applies to different people and different disciplines.”

### Face-to-Face in Physical Space

“One of the ideas that has emerged for me over our twenty-four hours together has not been overtly articulated, but rather implicitly felt and conveyed through dialogue and discussion. The idea is that we need-- as digital literacy advocates, teachers, leaders, and learners-- **opportunities to connect face-to-face in *physical* space.** Although we have a plethora of digital tools and networks at our fingertips through which we can engage, there is something irreplaceable about the immediacy and intimacy of our face-to-face learning together that ignites and inspires.”

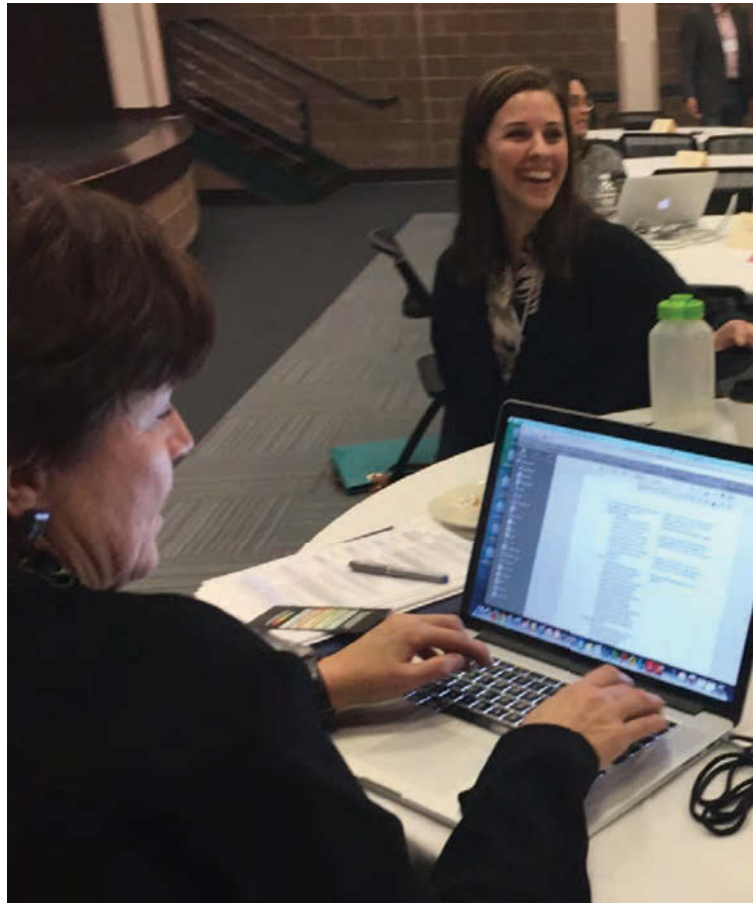


## Disciplinary Context Matters

“For me a key insight -- more of a reminder than an insight I suppose -- has been how specific our approaches to digital media literacy are. By specific I’m thinking about institutional contexts -- how chemists think about digital literacy one way, anthropologists another, and business faculty another. Or colleagues from large or very research-focused universities vs. those at smaller or more teaching-focused places. But I’m also thinking about

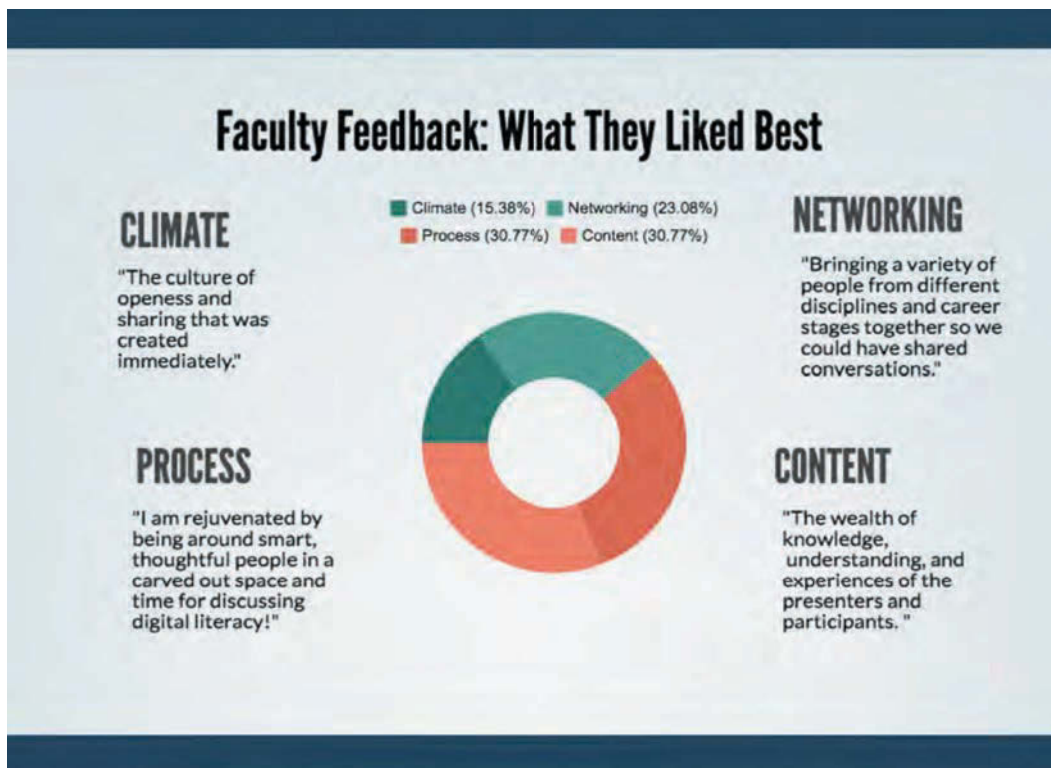
personal contexts: those of our colleagues who grew up with digital media often think about literacy differently from those of us who grew up as scholars in the pre-digital age. Or those who are deeply immersed in things digital as compared to those of us who are working around the margins. The reason this is so important to me is that it serves as a reminder of just how difficult it is to reach any sort of consensus on what digital literacy is, how

important teaching it might be, and how we might actually teach it. On the positive side is the fact that **all this diversity of approach and motivation gives us a much wider and interesting field of endeavor.** It’s not news that this is difficult work, but it’s useful to be reminded of the benefits of difficulty and complexity.”



## Program Evaluation

We asked faculty to complete a four-item questionnaire at the conclusion of the program and received 39 complete responses. The first question asked participants, “What did you like best about the symposium?” After reviewing responses, we identified four themes: content, networking, process and climate.



**Content.** 31% of participants identified the program content as the best feature of the symposium. One participant said, “I liked the fact that it moved along so efficiently. I got enough information in a short time to try so many things when school begins again.” A participant noted, “Brought together a variety of interesting, and accomplished people across higher education, most of whom are eager to share ideas, etc.” Another said, “I really liked the afternoon "birds of a feather" session I attended on social justice. I just wish it could have lasted longer!”

**Process.** 31% of participants identified the process, structure and organization of the symposium as a key strength. One participant noted, “The variety of learning opportunities, from speakers, to discussions, to round tables. Even though it was a short conference, having all these different ways of engaging the topic was really helpful. Having the reading list to prepare was good too.” Another said, “The overall structure and schedule - so much packed into a 24-hour period, with lots of rich opportunities for networking and learning.”

**Networking.** 23% of participants appreciated the opportunity to engage and interact with others. One participant said, “I really appreciate small(er) conferences/symposiums. I've lost interest in the massive

academic conferences, and much prefer gatherings like this.” Another said, “Meeting friends and have time to talk and hang out to vent, listen, brainstorm, and learn about their work and challenges. One participant who noted our approach to supporting diverse forms of social interaction said, “Guided networking was great!”

**Climate.** 15% of participants commented on the climate of the symposium. One noted, “What was most resonate was the abundance of ideas and solutions, or “take aways” that faculty can begin to use immediately. The people; the participants and the facilitators were simply wonderful.” Another observed, “One key insight is that the structure of our time together has been a wonderful mix of whole group, small group, formal, informal, structured, free, in-person, back channel, discussion, movement, etc. It has made me reflect on how the organization of time spent collaboratively shapes the outcomes of that time, and the feelings about that time.”

**Key Insights.** We asked faculty to respond to the question. “What key insights did you gain from your participation?” and received 39 complete responses. After reviewing responses, we identified six themes: importance of digital literacy, multiperspectival approaches, the connection between practical activities and theoretical ideas, the value of small steps and iterative design thinking, the need for support, and the benefits of collaboration.

**Importance of the Issue.** Most participants commented on acquiring a new appreciation for the relevance of digital literacy to the future of higher education. One wrote, “There’s a real energy for “change” in #highered. The \$600 million dollar question is how to capture that energy in a way that leads to actual change.” Another participant noted, “There’s so much I don’t know (or still have to learn). Faculty development is a sticky issue across the board and motivating faculty to change is challenging, but we need t take it one step at a time. We can work with each person, most often one on one, to help them learn the necessary knowledge and skills.”

**Multiperspectival Approaches.** Many participants marveled at the breadth and depth of perspectives on the topic of digital literacy in higher education. One said, “I gained new insights regarding digital literacy and pedagogy, as well as perspectives from other disciplines that were previously not known to me. We all have common struggles and the opportunity to discuss these was invaluable.” One participant noted, “I am not alone in my feelings of isolation with regards to my work in digital/media literacy. Others expressed feelings of being siloed and about their desire to see more cross-disciplinary engagement in topics and teaching related to digital and media literacy.”

**Practical and Theoretical.** Some participants appreciated the chance to gain practical strategies that could be immediately useful in the classroom. One participant wrote, “I learned about a number of resources that I can immediately integrate into my courses. I also gained valuable insights from the projects that others are working on in their unique contexts.” Another wrote, “Lots of teachers at different levels and even administrators are grappling with the ways that higher ed is being disrupted. Got some nifty ideas for both classroom teaching as well as conceptual additions to the coursework and the scholarly networking that is important to career growth.”

**Small Steps.** For some, the message to “go slow to go fast” resonated. One participant said, “I got encouragement to start small and iterate, not to try to solve everything at once.” Another said, “Even we are in different places in our journeys in digital and



media literacy; but we all agree that we need to keep moving forward to benefit our students.”

**Need for Support.** Many faculty gained greater awareness of the gap between experts and novices among faculty exploring digital literacy in higher education. One participant wrote, “My Personal Learning Network and community is ahead of the game in talking about these issues. I need to figure out how to be patient with others.” Another wrote of the need to support students to acquire these competencies, noting, “We are all ambassadors of the concept of digital literacy and have a responsibility to bring awareness and insight to the practice and implementation. Faculty have a keen responsibility to get students where they need to go in order to be ready for the 21st century workforce.”

**Value of Collaboration.** For many participants, the increased sense of being part of a larger community was a key insight. One participant wrote, “I see commonalities in the struggles to get digital literacy accepted and valued in higher ed (this is both depressing and reassuring, in the sense that I am not alone!)” Another wrote, “I see that I’m not alone, that there are many people who want to teach digital literacy in all different fields and who want to improve their skills in order to do so more effectively.”

**Recommendations for Improvement.** We asked faculty to respond to the question, “What could be done to improve the program?” and received 40 complete open-ended responses. After reviewing and coding responses, we identified these themes: keep it as it is (14 responses) make it longer to have time for more content and activities (16 responses), increase the diversity of faculty participants (2 responses), more formal structure (1 response) and more support and funding to document the learning experience to increase its visibility (1 response). Although many participants asked for the program to be longer, one participant noted, “Really like the balance of ‘guided’ networking, structured and unstructured time. Also like the pressure of doing this in 24 hours. It made it a focused and immersive experience that might have been diluted with more time.”

**Anticipated Action Steps.** We asked faculty to respond to the question, “What next steps might you be inspired to take as a result of the ideas shared here?” Participants wrote open-ended responses which we reviewed and coded to identify personal-level action as well as collective action. At the **personal level**, participants want to continue developing skills through exploring digital tools and address their online digital identity in a more strategic and intentional way. They also want to engage in creative activity, including writing and creating as well as gaining new knowledge through research. At the **curricular level**, participants want to engage their own students, revise curriculum and develop new programs. At the **collective action level**, participants want to collaborate with other colleagues from diverse disciplines, share ideas with colleagues, continue networking and developing professional relationships, and share ideas with academic leaders. Specific intended action steps mentioned by faculty participants are described below.

## Anticipated Personal, Curricular and Leadership Actions

*From the post-event survey, we asked faculty to describe specific actions that they intended to take in the near future as a result of participating in the program. They fell into three categories: personal actions, curricular actions, and leadership actions.*

### Explore Digital Tools & Gain Skills

- Improve my digital skills and knowledge; learn to code and to create more digital information; increase my ability to interpret digital information.
- To be a digital person, and get myself familiar with the digital tools to use in my classroom.
- Learn new technologies myself, like Padlet and Flipgrid
- I am definitely going to try out some new links and software that was recommended.
- I will be investigating some of the tools mentioned like flipgrid and gobookme scheduling app
- Improve existing multimedia classroom activities. Think of ways that I can help colleagues become more competent.
- Creating a flowchart for evaluating fake news.

### Digital Identity

- I am going to try and clean up my public profile on the internet.
- Personal and professional changes of my digital presence.
- Inspire others in higher ed to attend the institute and develop my online professional identity
- Get more sophisticated at teaching my students to manage their online presence.
- Develop a course on the digital identity of scholars

### Write and Create

- I'm going to write a digital literacy manifesto for my own teaching and learning.
- I really want to write an article about my experience of using Twitter to curate thoughts and resources over the last four years for my dissertation topic!
- Work collaboratively on a document.
- The Digital Literacy Manifesto is very intriguing to me.
- Write a bloody manifesto for my college provost and president! Blog more. Write scholarly stuff too but always open access!

### Research Activity

- Build better digital links between teaching and research.
- Move into using digital means of research/scholarship--public presence
- Finding more resources for support outside of my establishment. Looking at the gaps in the research on digital literacy in higher education.
- Explore research on media literacy and further teaching and pedagogical implications
- I am working on a project for funding at my institution that would support me in identifying collaborators across our campus in digital media literacy.

## Anticipated Curricular Activity

### Engage Students

- Inspire student involvement in incorporating digital literacy into higher education.
- Ask my students to define digital literacy in the beginning of class and revisit throughout the semester.

### Revise Curriculum

- Continue to look for ways to improve my media and information literacy class including more production/creative elements for my students.
- Make changes in my own teaching practice.
- Talk with Provost about revisions to course content and programs
- Reflect on takeaways and see how I can implement ideas in my own practice, as well as sharing ideas and insights with my students.

### Develop New Programs

- Ready to start development of a certificate program in digital pedagogies for faculty and grad students.
- I look forward to sharing the grad. certificate program with my colleagues in my own School of Ed. We're having a hard time making the case for programs that are costly and that don't either lead to certification or a masters or a doctorate. But, I think your model is well considered and replicable to other states.

## Anticipated Leadership Activity

### Collaborate

- Go meet someone in the physical sciences on my campus who is also interested in digital literacy.
- Hope that we can get together a workgroup to move forward on some of the ideas shared in our "birds of a feather" session.

### Share Ideas with Colleagues

- One of my departmental colleagues suggested to me the other day that we start sharing pedagogical practices in faculty meetings and after being here, I am more open to supporting that idea
- Bring a similar discussion to my department, my campus and our local public schools to develop universities work together
- I will go back to my institution and continue to spread the message of the importance of being current in literacy and pedagogy, but I will also take some time to listen to see where folks are now and where we should go. It's a different place than it was even two, three, four years ago.

### **Continue Networking and Develop Relationships**

- Definitely continue to reach out and collaborate with others across the country and beyond.
- Connecting beyond the symposium with people I met here
- I'm planning to gather an interdisciplinary group of scholars my institution to brainstorm digital initiatives that we can incorporate for our students.
- Plenty of individual plans for home implementation, but perhaps there should be the development of a group or consortium with a conference/gathering as well.

### **Share Ideas with Academic Leaders**

- I will bring back some of the insights to my campus and share them with our deans.
- Capture the ideas and arguments from the symposium and share them with my dean on Wednesday.
- Speak with the leadership on my campus to introduce these great ideas and to facilitate their incorporation across the curriculum.
- Meet with my department head to have a discussion about digital literacy and share out time built into our department meetings.

## **Drafting a Digital Literacy Manifesto**

*Some participants drafted some key ideas that represent core values of their understanding of digital literacy in higher education.*

This we believe...

1. Digital literacy is a fundamental competence of work, life and citizenship in a networked information ecosphere and all faculty have a role to play in cultivating the digital literacy competencies of undergraduate and graduate students and colleagues.
2. Everyone learns from everyone in a networked learning environment.
3. Digital literacy includes both general competencies that apply to all domains of inquiry and more discipline-specific competencies that apply to particular fields. Respect for the diversity of approaches to learning and teaching digital literacy is key to advancing the future of the field.
4. Learner empowerment transforms education in profound and positive ways. Passion matters and digital literacy helps students discover their passion for learning. When students learn by advancing digital literacy competencies, skills and habits of mind, they become learners for a lifetime.
5. Digital literacy in higher education will take different forms depending on the institutional and disciplinary contexts in which it is learned. We have much to learn from our colleagues working in K-12 contexts who are exploring pedagogies that empower students to critically analyze, create, connect and share (and vice versa).
6. Online reading comprehension and critical analysis competencies can be advanced through a variety of pedagogies including the use of digital annotation and tools for dialogue and discussion.

7. When students create digital media as part of a learning experience, they deepen their ownership of the ideas they encounter and make authentic contributions to a knowledge community..
8. Digital literacy must be distinguished from online learning, MOOCs or other forms that “deliver” education through technology use in higher education. Digital literacy competencies can be acquired and exercised in online learning contexts online only when learners engage in practices that develop those competencies.
9. Faculty cannot outsource the integration of digital literacy into their courses by relying on an instructional technologist. But instructional technology professionals are key resources to faculty as learners themselves.
10. New approaches to professional development are needed for faculty to develop their own digital literacy competencies and to share “good practices” with peers.

## **A Measure of Program Success**

The University of Rhode Island’s Winter Symposium on Digital Literacy in Higher Education cultivated high levels of loyalty among participants. We asked, “On a scale from 1-10, how likely are you to recommend this symposium to others?” 10 is “extremely likely” and 1 is “extremely unlikely.” We found that 87% are Supporters, giving a 9 or 10 rating. 10% are Passives, giving a 8 or 7 rating. One Detractor rated the program a 5, representing 2%. The Net Promoter Score is calculated as an absolute number, taking the Supporters minus Detractors. With a Net Promoter score of 85, we hope to continue to support the work needed to help faculty advance digital literacy in higher education.

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The Media Education Lab advances digital and media literacy education through scholarship and community service. We offer professional development programs, multimedia curriculum resources, research and consulting services.

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