Book Review: Engaged Learners and Digital Citizens: Critical Outcomes for Teaching and Learning

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The ways in which we teach and learn, as well as our access to knowledge, have changed in the last half-century, making digital tools not only ubiquitous, but necessary in post-secondary education. In his volume, *Engaged Learners and Digital Citizens: Critical Outcomes for Teaching and Learning*, Brad Garner identifies digital literacy as a necessity and proposes practical ways in which post-secondary educators can support their students into learning how to use digital tools in an efficient and responsible way.

Garner argues that it is vital and urgent for higher education faculty members to start using digital technology in a way that allows students to think critically about the subject matter, but also about the role and effects of digital technology itself.

Brad Garner is a Director of Faculty Enrichment at Indiana Wesleyan University, USA, where he promotes the use of digital technology in higher education.

In the first chapter, the author identifies a series of inequalities in terms of access, knowledge and use of digital technology between individuals situated in different socio-economic and geographic structures. Access to digital technology and the Internet, as well as the way on which digital tools are used create a digital divide between both individuals and nations, the author suggests.

In the next chapter, the author discusses whether the way we define and understand knowledge, especially in higher education, should be reviewed, in the light of the current access to knowledge and current citing practices. The author quotes Howard, Serviss and Rodrigue (2010), who note that students pick out isolated quotes that support their position, instead of making the effort to engage with the material in its entirety. At the same time, Garner notes that a study conducted by Giles (2005) had found factual errors in both Wikipedia and Encyclopaedia Britannica and that the level of accuracy and reporting of scientific facts was roughly equivalent.

In the third chapter, Garner states that the digital divide (in terms of access, usage, motivation and skills to use digital technology) also exist in higher education. He mentions using social media as a way to create conversations and digital academic communities, yet notes the challenges using social media in higher education brings, such as ownership and

intellectual property, privacy and security, access and compliance and stability of technology overall.

Chapter four introduces the concept of digital citizenship, which the author attempts to define by listing a few other definitions, such as: "the ability to participate in society online" (Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal, 2008), and "a catch-all phrase to describe an ideal for our students with regard to understanding their opportunities and responsibilities in the Digital Age" (Ohler, 2010). The author suggests higher education would benefit from moving from simply using digital tools and resources ("digital literacy") for learning and research, to viewing the use digital technology as a way to participate in, and deeply influence, society ("digital citizenship").

In the fifth chapter, the author explores some of the ways in which the concept of digital citizenship could be imbedded in higher education course design. Garner suggest some practical ways to teach in the context of a global society and ways to help students reflect on the role of technology and, in general, learn to think critically.

The last two chapters list ways in which digital technology could be integrated in higher education, such as creating discussion forums, creating online peer review tools, quizzes, collaborative wikis and blogs, and using social media.

In his volume, Garner creates a high level map of the most popular digital tools used in research and teaching at a post-secondary level and creates a practical guide for anyone interested in bringing technology into their classroom or simply learning more about the ways in which they could benefit from using digital tools and resources.

While ample and clear in terms of the digital tools and their application to post-secondary education, this volume does not move into analyzing and unpacking the conceptual link between student engagement, technology and digital citizenship. In fact, engagement appears to be viewed in this volume as bi-product of using digital tools, and the author does not differentiate between different types or levels of engagement within the whole process of learning. The path to digital citizenship is only suggested and seen as an effect of using digital tactics that support critical thinking.

In conclusion, this volume is a great guide for faculty interested in embracing digital technology in their work, offering a review of digital tools available, the reasons why they are important in today's Digital Era and practical ways of embedding them in post-secondary teaching.

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