

Summary of Learning – EC&I 831

Throughout EC&I 831, I developed a deeper understanding of the ever-evolving concept of technology and media. From the early days of the internet and flip phones to the rapid advancements of Artificial Intelligence, technology has transformed the way we teach, learn, and connect. These changes challenge educators, including myself, to not only stay informed but also to lead the way in guiding students through the digital world.

A recurring theme throughout this course has been the importance of digital literacy. Today's students may be fluent in navigating technology, but many lack the skills to think critically about the content they take in. Through my weekly reflections, I explored the challenges of supporting students in developing these essential skills. Topics such as social media, AI-generated content, and cellphone use in schools gave me space to reflect deeply on how I currently teach - and how I want to grow as an educator and within my own digital literacy.

The cellphone ban introduced by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, and the discussions it prompted within our course, made me reflect on my own school's policies. At the federal school where I teach, we did not initially follow the ban but eventually adopted a similar stance, although this was not due to engagement issues, but as a response to cyberbullying. This sparked important questions in our reflections: *Should students have access to phones in class? How do we create boundaries without limiting access to tech tools—especially in schools with fewer digital resources?*

We also engaged with course readings that shaped our understanding of ethical, inclusive, and critical approaches to technology. One of the biggest takeaways for me was the importance of remixing and experimentation in education. Through platforms like Teachers Pay Teachers, MagicSchool.AI, and ChatGPT, teachers are personalizing and reshaping content to better suit their classrooms. Although, Articles about OERs (Open Educational Resources) helped me see how freely accessible resources can bridge equity gaps, especially in under-resourced schools like mine. Although there are sources such as Teacher Pay Teachers, OERs support both educators and students in expanding access to quality content and have become essential in my own planning.

Our course Discord channel became a valuable networking space. This collaborative hub allowed us to share resources, ask questions, and provide support across time zones and school divisions. It was more than a communication tool—it was a place of professional growth, where I learned just as much from my classmates as from course materials.

Our exploration of AI tools like Twinpics.AI, Lumiere, and HelloHistory.AI helped me imagine engaging new ways to use tech in the classroom. I now see how AI can be used for creative writing, historical inquiry, or differentiated instruction. However, I also recognize the ethical challenges and have faced them firsthand: students are increasingly using AI to generate

assignments without understanding the limits of these tools or learning how to use them appropriately. This raises critical questions: *How do we teach students to use AI ethically? How can we encourage creativity while maintaining academic integrity?*

Another area that we explored deeply was social media—its potential, its pitfalls, and its power. Students are constantly engaging with platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat. While these spaces can be informative, they can also spread misinformation, reinforce bias, and become arenas for discrimination and cyberbullying. Educators need to guide students in evaluating digital content, checking sources, and understanding the emotional and mental impact of their online lives. We also explored social media as a tool for activism, acknowledging the delicate balance teachers must strike between personal advocacy and professional responsibility. The critical questions raised: *What can we share with students? What are we confident on adding to our digital footprint?*

Ultimately, EC&I 831 taught me that teaching in a digital age is not just about using technology—but about understanding it. It's about equipping ourselves and our students with the tools to navigate an increasingly complex world. Through course readings, peer insights, collaborative networking, critical reflections, assessments, and tech experimentation, I have grown not only in knowledge but in confidence as a digitally literate educator. This course has sparked a passion in me to continue exploring, experimenting, and sharing—because when teachers grow, students thrive.

In my final assessment, I created a video summary of learning using AI tools. I first drafted a written component, then used ChatGPT to draft a script, and finally uploaded it to Synthesia to generate a polished AI avatar presentation. This hands-on process allowed me to truly experience how AI can streamline content creation while still promoting creativity and reflection.