



MSc in Digital Education

COURSE GUIDE:

**Information literacies for
digital education**

Session 2019/20: Semester 2

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Welcome

Welcome to *Information literacies for digital education*.

This course engages with the current challenges of the continuously changing digital information landscape, and aims to support students in developing their understanding of information literacies. Knowing how to find, evaluate, use and 'remix' information critically, and in an ethical way, are essential aspects of learning, teaching and working in the digital age. This course will enable students to develop their own information literacies, and to reflect on the development of the information practices of students, clients and co-workers.

In thinking about and discussing the issues, we would like you reflect and debate from three angles:

- 1) what you think and experience as a member of the course
- 2) the implications for you as an educator or facilitator in others' education or professional development
- 3) how to engage your students, clients or colleagues.

The course is based on readings and 'playground' activities that are selected to be thought-provoking and, we hope, engaging. As a group, we will be using discussion boards to facilitate reflection and for the exchange of views that come out of these readings and activities. Reflection and debate on discussion boards are an essential element of the course – so, although participation and contribution is not assessed, we strongly encourage you to use the discussion boards to get the most out of the course and to learn from each other. The wide range of backgrounds of those on the programme provides a rare opportunity for engaging with an amazing community of learning.

There are two assessed pieces of work for this course: 1) the creation of a piece of coursework designed to develop information skills in your students, colleagues or clients and 2) an end of course essay.

I am very much looking forward to the coming weeks, and anticipate many interesting debates and discussions!



Marshall Dozier

Course learning outcomes

On completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Critically engage with 'new literacies' concepts such as 'information literacy' and 'digital literacy'
2. Critically examine and develop their own information practices
3. Critically reflect on the development of the information practices of students, clients and co-workers
4. Demonstrate a critical understanding of issues related to publication and re-use of informational objects
5. Critically engage with information as an element of social and political power

Delivery and workload

As with the other courses in the programme, this course is delivered entirely online using as its main delivery platform the virtual learning environment Moodle. We will use Collaborate for synchronous discussions.

As with other 20 credit courses, successful participation will require a time commitment of around 7-10 hours a week, with more likely around the time of assignment completion (20 credit courses require 200 hours of study). Your strong commitment to the collaborative class activities is expected across the 12 weeks of the course.

Although the course is designed to be flexible, **you will need to keep up with the week-by-week structure** in order to take part in the group tasks.

Forums for discussion

The course group discussion during the course will take place using discussion boards in Moodle, which enable you to post and read messages at any time which suits you. As a participant in this course, you are expected to make regular contributions to these class discussions.

We will also have regular synchronous discussion meetings in Collaborate. We recognise that the synchronous discussions will be difficult to schedule at times when everyone is available, so I will post summaries or recordings of the discussions in Moodle for everyone to get a chance to catch up on the discussion and make further comments. I also encourage you to arrange additional discussion meetings with others on course who are available at similar times.

Participation etiquette

The course discussions are the primary vehicle for exchange of ideas on this course, and it is important that you participate.

Because we want the discussions to be a place where you can share your reflections and even half-formed ideas, it is very important that debate is respectful and constructive. Clearly, debate is less interesting if no one disagrees with anything, so we expect differences of opinion and experience to be welcomed and explored in the discussions.

When taking part in the discussion forums, please apply the basic rules of etiquette:

- Make contributions short and to the point.
- Keep contestation polite.

- Try to make sure others' contributions are answered, though this doesn't mean everyone has to answer everyone else!
- Don't overly worry about structure but do make yourself clear.

Our main aim should be to move the discussion forward in a positive way.

Networking and connecting

As well as using different digital spaces for formal course discussions, we would strongly encourage you to make connections informally. Twitter and Skype may prove useful for students on the course in networking, after class discussions, debriefs and chats that could be the virtual equivalent of having a coffee together. Guidance on setting up accounts for these technologies is in the Technologies Handbook, available at <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/mscdetech/>.

Computer skills and equipment you need

As with other courses on this programme, you must have good access to an internet-enabled computer and browser capable of delivering the VLE Moodle and any other applications you wish to use this during the course.

Course readings will be delivered electronically, via a Resource List managed through the Library.

Course structure and format

Information Literacies for Online Learning runs over 12 weeks, or one semester, from Monday 13 January until Sunday 5 April 2020.

A week of study on this course includes the weekend, i.e. each week of work runs from Monday to Sunday.

The course is divided into several blocks, with a free block at the end for preparing the end of course essay. An outline is given here, and you'll find more detail in the course Moodle site itself.

Block 1 – Information Literacies: Definitions and Debates

In these initial weeks, you will be invited to engage with the concepts of information literacies in personal, educational and societal spheres. You will examine and reflect upon your own approaches to handling information, and explore what assumptions we all may make about others' skills and awareness of this area.

Block 2 – Knowledge equity: the case of Wikipedia

In these weeks we use Wikipedia as a case for discussion and practice round issues of validity or reliability of information sources, co-creation of informational resources, bias in selection and portrayal of what is worthy of mention in a historical record.

Block 3 – Ethical and policy issues

This block concentrates on ethical and policy issues around collection, use and re-use of data and information. Reading and discussion will focus around the implications for, and impact on, learning and teaching of intellectual property rights, censorship, copyright and plagiarism, privacy and Data Protection.

Block 4 – The Open agenda

This block builds on the previous weeks with a critical focus on the agenda toward Open: open educational resources, open access, open source, open science, citizen science and crowd-sourcing, and more. What are the underlying principles and philosophical positions? What are the assumptions behind the “good” in being open?

Block 5 – Information futures

Discussion and activities over this block will focus on what impact developments such as ubiquitous mobile technology and data-gathering have on our information and educational practices. Topics covered will include data literacy and digital divides.

Block 6 – Assignment preparation

This week is set aside for preparing your second assignment (see assessment details below).

Assessment

The assessment will have two parts:

1. Coursework design, comprising 40% of the final mark
2. An essay, comprising 60% of the final mark.

1) Coursework design (40%)

You will design a piece of coursework in any subject area, aimed at a group of students/co-workers/clients. The coursework must require the group to use and develop their information practices in the context of the area of learning. It is not necessary actually to create a full coursework brief as would be given to the intended audience; a description giving just enough detail to support your rationale and discussion would be enough.

The finished Coursework design assignment will include a discussion of at least the following topics:

- who is the target audience?
- what subject knowledge/expertise is being assessed in the coursework?
- what information skills are being developed?
- why is development of those skills important to the target audience?
- how is that skills development being assessed?
- how does the coursework get them to think about their own skills in the context of the subject, or as transferable skills?
- do you anticipate any potential weaknesses in the coursework assignment, or any challenges in engaging the target audience?

This assignment should be approximately **1,500** words. If you decide to include a complete copy of the designed coursework, it may be best added as an appendix. For this assignment, we would prioritise your rationale and discussion rather than effort to create and polish a coursework brief that will not actually be used.

Assessment criteria

There are three core criteria by which this assignment will be assessed:

- Knowledge and understanding of concepts
Does the assignment show a critical engagement with the concepts and theories introduced?

- Framing and analysing practice
Does the assignment draw on the professional/research literature, to show an analytical approach to the context?
- Development of professional practice
There is clear evidence of well-principled development of practice, with a sound rationale for the purposes pursued and the strategies employed.

The Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme, described in the *Programme Handbook* gives more detail on how the core assessment criteria are graded.

2) End of course Essay (60%)

This assignment should be submitted at the end of the course. Participants will submit an essay on an issue of their choice to do with information literacies or practices in digital education or learning.

The format of the essay is optional – it can be, for example, a word-processed document or a web-essay. If you would like to use another format, it would be a good idea to discuss the practicalities with me in advance. The finished assignment should be equivalent to **2,500** words.

Assessment criteria

There are three core criteria by which this assignment will be assessed. Since it offers such broad scope in terms of topic and form you are also given the opportunity to **suggest up to three additional criteria defined by yourself**. For example, if you were working with media alternative to a traditional word-processed essay, you might wish to include visual impact and effective linking as additional criteria. You will need to agree these additional criteria with us in advance of submission and submit them with the finished assignment.

The core criteria for assessment are as follows.

- Knowledge and understanding of concepts
Does the assignment show a critical engagement with the concepts and theories introduced?
- Knowledge and use of the literature
Have the relevant key references been used?
Have other relevant sources been drawn on and coherently integrated into the analysis?
- Constructing academic discourse
Is the assignment produced with careful attention to the quality of the writing and the skilful expression of ideas?

Although it is not compulsory, we do encourage you to nominate your own criteria in addition to these. It can seem like more work at the time but – particularly if you are experimenting with media forms – it offers a valuable way to think through some of the crucial issues around how we should go about assessing learning in these still novel digital environments.

Submission dates

1. The coursework design should be submitted by the end of week 6 by 12 noon UK time on Monday 24 February 2020

- The end of course essay should be submitted by 12 noon UK time on Monday 6 April 2020

The postgraduate common marking scheme

Grades will be awarded in line with the University's postgraduate common marking scheme:

Mark (%)	Grade	Description
90-100	A1	An excellent performance, satisfactory for a distinction
80-89	A2	An excellent performance, satisfactory for a distinction
70 - 79	A3	An excellent performance, satisfactory for a distinction
60 - 69	B	A very good performance
50 – 59	C	A good performance, satisfactory for a masters degree
40 -49*	D	A satisfactory performance for the diploma, but inadequate for a masters degree
30-39**	E	Marginal fail
20-29	F	Clear fail
10-19	G	Bad fail
0-9	H	Bad fail

The pass mark is grade D (40%).

For more detail on the regulations which govern the course and the programme you should consult your Programme Handbook and the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) which are to be found on the Web at: <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/>. In particular, the regulations governing taught postgraduate programmes are included at: <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/19-20/regulations/postgrad.php>

Credit and continuation of study

Successful completion of this course will give you 20 Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) points at postgraduate level 11. More details of the SCQF can be found on the Web at: <http://www.scqf.org.uk/>

The full MSc in Digital Education will comprise one foundation course and four additional 20 credit courses, plus a dissertation. The list of available options is available on the programme web site at: <http://digital.education.ed.ac.uk/courses>

The regulations governing satisfactory progress for continuation to Masters level by submission of a dissertation are given in your Programme Handbook.

Readings

You are not required to purchase any books for this course. All essential readings are provided, in electronic form, in the relevant areas of course content. A few are openly available on the web. The majority are in the form of links to e-books and e-journals which you should be able to access if you are signed in with your UoE login.

If you have any problems accessing the readings, do let me know.

As with other courses on the programme, you are expected to read all the **essential** readings, and a selection of the **further** readings.

Formative feedback/feedforward

The course has been designed to include opportunities for formative feedback on participation and planning for assignments. This will take place through discussion forums and tutorials. Your participation in tasks and the discussion around these tasks form an important source of feedback from peers and tutors, so your sustained engagement in these elements of the course is strongly encouraged. You will receive feedback on your first assignment before the final assignment is due and can use this as feedforward for that purpose.

Course tutor contact information

For help and advice on any aspect of the course, contact me in the first instance. My contact details are:

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+44 (0)131 650 3688

Also on Twitter at @mafrado for informal chat and sharing of ideas and resources.