

Using Technology for Language Learning

Digital Citizenship

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However you use technology in the classroom, every teacher needs to teach their students how to be good digital citizens. Just like we want students to become active and thoughtful participants in the physical classroom, we need to include in our instruction our expectations for becoming successful and responsible users of technology.



Technology is a double-edged sword: students will use it the way you let them. Wood shop teachers must provide safety guidelines and ongoing feedback on the appropriate use of power tools. Coaches teach proper form to help avoid injuries. Driver's Education teachers provide constant feedback while students learn to operate motor vehicles. Teaching your expectations from the beginning with constant and consistent reinforcement helps your students become digital citizens who are safe and conscientious digital citizens.

First, think about how you want your students to use technology and what expectations you have. Make simple but clear rules with consequences that are consistent with the rest of your class rules. Some teachers prefer to incorporate making rules into the activities the students assist in at the beginning of the school year to encourage their buy-in. Post the rules in your room, on your website, and in your parent letter. Most students follow rules when they are explicitly stated and frequently reinforced.

Finding resources to teach digital citizenship is easier than you think. Look to your school's administration or the division. Do they have stated guidelines for the use of technology? Do they already have a system in place for teaching digital citizenship skills? Check with your local police. Many police departments have a public outreach officer who can come speak to your class and have materials useful for your instruction.

Online, there are many options. [Google for Education](#) has a great site full of information on digital citizenship. Since Google is ubiquitous, especially with YouTube, their clear and direct instruction on maintaining privacy and strengthening online security is really useful. There is also a tutorial on effective internet searching to help your students save time and energy while researching topics.

Search your favorite browser for digital citizenship materials. Most browsers have created or curated content for teaching young people safe and proper online behaviors.

[Common Sense Media](#) has resources for educators to teach digital citizenship. There are games for third through fifth graders and iBooks for the upper grades, free for downloading.

Educatorstechnology.com shares five excellent videos on digital use education. Specifically, sites on YouTube address everything from safe surfing to safeguarding your online identity. These targeted videos engage students in a way a teacher's lecture never will.

Digizen.org provides extensive resources through three distinct portals: Teachers, Parents or Kids. Games, videos and activities make this an engaging and interactive site. Guidance for creating strong passwords, family agreements for online use, and strategies for combatting cyberbullying are just a few of its exceptional features.

Besides direct digital citizenship instruction, if you are using the internet extensively in your lessons, consider using a learning management system. An LMS can provide a secure, closed environment in which your students can interact with you and each other. Learning management systems (like Blackboard, Moodle or Schoology) give you a clear way to assign and collect student work. Check out this [article](#), on the eLearning Industry site, for the top twenty learning management systems.

Finally, have the students internalize the lessons by asking them to create public service announcements about cyberbullying, appropriate social networking behavior and netiquette. Naturally, you'll want them to do this in the target language. Publish to your private YouTube for Education channel and share with all your classes.

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