Metaliterate Learner Characteristics

What Does it Mean to be a Metaliterate Learner?

Being **collaborative** reinforces dialogue among participants and the shared roles of both learner and teacher. Metaliterate learners are co-creators of knowledge who practice teaching and learning in partnership with individuals and teams. Metaliterate learners are open to different viewpoints, rather than only identifying with communities that agree with what they think or say.

The **participatory** characteristic is closely connected to being collaborative. Participation involves active and critical engagement with individuals in community settings and social media. As part of this process, everyone takes responsibility for the information they produce and share, while understanding that original and repurposed information has meaning and
consequences. Metaliterate learners create new knowledge by working closely with individuals and groups in social settings. They build communities of trust that are accountable for the communications that originate and circulate through media.

The reflective characteristic fosters thinking about one’s own thinking and self-regulating one’s own learning. Metaliterate learners play an empowering role in identifying and understanding what they know and what they don’t know and work toward filling gaps in knowledge. Being reflective supports an openness to diverse viewpoints while also being in control of meeting individual learning goals and objectives.

Being civic-minded reinforces civic responsibility and community-based accountability. The participatory nature of social media, for instance, relies on the norms and expectations of the community, especially since many traditional editorial filters have either changed significantly or disappeared entirely. The civic-minded characteristic acknowledges that being connected is not enough and that individuals also need to be responsible for the communities they design and build. Metaliterate learners are contributors to social spaces and know how to create and consume meaningful information in community settings.

The open characteristic supports transparent teaching and learning in communities. Consider the importance of being open to new ideas, insights and perspectives. This means having empathy in social spaces to gain a deeper understanding of individuals and groups with different perspectives from our own. Metaliterate learners openly create and share knowledge by working together as both teachers and learners.

Being adaptable prepares individuals for technologies that constantly change while being responsive and flexible to new ways of learning and knowing. Metaliterate learners are empowered by effectively using technologies while protecting personal privacy and being aware of information security. Metaliterate learners understand the impact technology has on how content is produced, and shared.

The productive characteristic involves being a creative producer of original and repurposed information. Metaliteracy supports the dynamic production of information and encourages reflection on this work and one’s own thinking during this process. While individuals may have access to the latest mobile devices, they may not automatically see themselves as producers of information. Metaliterate learners are productive creators of information and learn through the trial and error of applying technology to content creation.

Being an informed consumer of information is a critical aspect of the consumer-producer dynamic of metaliteracy. We need to be informed about the origin of information, how accurate and reliable it is, and if it contains bias. Being informed allows us to distinguish between fact and fiction, real and virtual, as well as truth and untruth. The informed characteristic supports all of the other metaliteracy attributes and reinforces the value of objective and sustained research. Doing so encourages individuals to consume and produce accurate and verifiable information and to analyze bias. Being informed is related to creating
and sharing information through all media, and in understanding how to effectively participate in communities.

Collectively, all of these characteristics define the metaliterate learner. Think about the specific qualities you already possess and those that may need further development. How might you put these themes into practice as you follow your own path as an empowered metaliterate learner?