Media Ecology and Learning Case

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Introduction

Skybug is a fifteen year old female that lives in the Fairmont area. She lives with both of her parents and she is an only child. Her parents are high school educated and both hold jobs outside the home. Skybug is also a relative to the author of this case. When Skybug was in kindergarten her teachers decided to hold her back because of her struggles in core subjects. She still struggles, but has been getting tutored over the years. She also has had an IEP throughout her school career. She is currently getting ready to be a freshman entering high school. Skybug really enjoys music of all genres and is even apart of the school's band.

Skybug has an access to a variety of technology. She has a computer, Ipad, Iphone, Ipod, Wii, and a XBox at home. She has access to gaming systems, but she said she is not into games and doesn't play them. She mostly spends her time on youtube or looking up new music. She also has access to technology at her school. At home she said she mostly uses her Ipad and her phone. Her phone is always with her and she is always texting her friends. She has access to all of her technology anytime. She only gets technology taken away as a consequence for her wrongful actions if they arise. With technology at school, every year she has to sign a contract saying that she will use the school's technology in a responsible manner. She has never had a problem with inappropriate usage at school.

Hanging Out

"The digitally wise also realize that they ability to control digital technology, to bend it to their needs, is a key skill in the digital age."(Prensky, 2011, p. 91)

Skybug uses technology to fit her wants and needs. She is comfortable and capable using technology in ways she likes. Skybug does not play video games, but she still engages in social

interactions and digital media. Skybug really enjoys music. She usually never leaves her house without her Ipod and her Beet headphones. She enjoys all genres and one of her favorite things to do is to look up new music on Youtube with her friends. Skybug and her friends love finding new interesting music, talking about the music, and even trying to play some of this music. Skybug and some of her friends are in the band together so music is a big part of their school career.

Another big social interaction that Skybug participates in is social media. The social media that Skybug has is Facebook. She shares basic information about herself, pictures, statuses, and even has conversations with her school friends. Most of Skybug friends have a Facebook account as well. Most of Skybug's communication is done on Facebook, messaging, or texting. She rarely talks to her friends on the phone. Out of the list of communication skills Skyler mostly texts her friends to get ahold of them or vice versa. "The pattern of social life enabled by networked digital technologies is one that allows for a sociability based on the person, connecting people through geographically disperse social networks."(Wellman, 2010, p. 132)

Messing Around

Skybug has shared with me that her favorite thing to do on the computer is to look up new music and find music on Youtube. If you see Skybug you know that she is deeply affected by music and it plays a key role in her life. She always wears shirts that have a band name on them, her ipod is always with her, and she freely chose to be apart of the school's band. Children should be apart of something they enjoy and music is educational in so many ways. Music

teaches about expression, moods, rhythms, helps increase our memory. When someone is a part of a group or band there are many positive outcomes to learning to play an instrument. They are increase collaborative skills, responsibility, promotes social skills, promotes listening skills etc...

Geeking Out

Skybug can do the basic skills necessary to get homework and assignments completed. She can also do some basic skills at home. She has not yet been capable to do more complicated things with the computer. She said that most of her knowledge about the computer and technology came from learning those skills from school. Skybug says she only really uses the computer at school for typing assignments, research, and testing. Some skills that she uses at home is surfing the web for new music and downloading it to her iPod. She also uses Youtube and she does make videos herself and uploads them to her Facebook page or the web.

Schooling

"As a society and the world of work change, the skills that students need to live thrive in it also change. The competition will be fierce and can come from anywhere in this flat world. I some ways, student today are ahead of their elders. Technology is second nature to them and they accept and use it without question. Schools lag behind." (Solomon & Schrum, 2007, p. 127) Skybug said that most of what she has learned about computers and technology was from the school setting. She mostly uses a computer at school for typing, researching, and testing. Skybug said that using the computer or technology at school was usually boring because it was never anything new or hardly used at all. The assignments were always the repetitive and boring. Skybug said that she wished they could do skills that she used at home or things that she thought would be fun, but when I asked if she thought her teachers would let her she said probably not

because teachers always want assignments done how they want them done and no changing the instructions. “With learning of digital technologies taking place in informal settings such as homes, there has been considerable interest in contextualizing learning and looking at different styles and forms of learning.”(Coffield, 2000, p. 14)

Teaching

The interview that I had with Skybug was very eye opening. Our school systems have all this technology and digital media, but we are not using it to its fullest potential. The school systems are using technology to do repetitive assignments and skills these younger generations of students already know or we are hardly using it at all. This makes students feel bored and I do not blame them for feeling this way. Our technology and digital media grows everyday and it is the teachers and school systems job to grow in the way we teach these students. We need to show them new skills, give them a little more freedom with assignments to use those outside skills and creativity in assignments, and we need to be comfortable with technology ourselves. We do not want all of these children to use these skills outside of the school system. We want learning to be enjoyable and fun.

“One of the important developments for young people producing media is the ease of sharing their work with a potentially global audience.” (Willett, 2009, p. 21)

As teachers we can engage students through many things that students are interested in. For example, music plays a key role in Skybug’s life. We can introduce Skybug to blogging where she can have the freedom to create her own page dedicated to music. “ The sequential and chronological characteristics of the blog format suggest how it can be useful in capturing such

things as the development of a narrative, the design and implementation of a project, the progress of research, emerging processes, the aggregation of links or references, and observations or reflections which develop over time."(Boud, 2001, p. 88)

She will have the responsibility to make posts and interact with others through her blog. She could also search for new music and add to her blog page and talk about it and start a discussion with others. Since this task would be focused on something Skybug likes. She would not feel like this was work. Through the blogging process it would improve her writing skills, social skills, and researching skills.

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