Digital Citizenship and Responsibility

The concept of digital citizenship and responsibility encompasses the issues of accessibility, copyright protection, and plagiarism, but it's more than that. It also involves developing cultural understanding, addressing the diverse needs of learners and promoting and modeling netiquette and proper social interactions when using digital resources. It is the educator’s responsibility to model these behaviors and expect students to understand and appreciate these critical global issues in order for them to be responsible digital citizens.

There are several things that I do to promote digital citizenship in my classes. I feel that I need to educate students first. There are informational areas in each of my online classes in which I explain what these topics are, tell them what I expect and support my position with appropriate informational websites. For instance, I have a short paragraph about netiquette, and explain what my expectations for their online in class behavior. I also send them to the following website which explains what netiquette is.

I also feel that my students don’t understand what constitutes plagiarism, so I explain to my students what it is, this is particularly important in my online classes in which it’s quite tempting to just copy and paste from sources on the internet. I also send them to a website that discusses plagiarism. In order to educate them as to how to avoid plagiarizing, I have some instructions on how to properly cite a reference and a link to a resource website.

I work very hard to ensure that the digital materials that I use in my class are accessible for all students. I use the Universal Design resources when developing my site. I choose sans serif fonts, which are easier for text readers to convert for sight-impaired students. I avoid using a lot of unnecessary colors in text. When I include video in my online classes, I have an alternate script for students as well. I also use the alt tag to describe any images included in the class. The LMS that I use for delivery of my online classes has a 508 resource area.

I model global community awareness by incorporating multicultural issues in my courses when appropriate and bring in resources that promote awareness and sensitivity in my students.

I also monitor all community discussions in my online classes and step in when necessary to make sure that my students know that they are expected to follow the approved netiquette guidelines for the class. Repeated violation of the rules will result in expulsion from class.