

Being literate is vital to success in today's society. ***Literacy is the ability to gain knowledge to use to communicate effectively. It is the ability to identify symbols, understanding their relationship to one another, and articulate their meaning is an essential part of literacy.***

Technology has changed and developed the literacy of our society. In the video, "What is Literacy" by Anne Balsamo says that literacy is a "historically specific term." The definition of literacy today looks different than it did years ago. Technology has changed and developed the way we communicate and learn from others. Later in the video, she also says "it is a community specific metric." Each community has their own expectations of what is an acceptable way to converse and learn from one another. The definition of literacy is evolving and changes as our world develops.

### **Elements of Literacy:**

Literacy is not just taught and explored in the classroom; it is taught through everyday life. Reading signs on the street, looking at the price of food, or talking to a friend all require an individual to be literate. James Paul Gee in "What is Literacy" states that "they are acquiring these literacies through experiences in the home both before and after school" (7). Children learn the ABCs from a young age, and those letters form words the students read to gain knowledge and use to communicate their needs and wishes. Literacy is essential to survival meet basic human needs; without literacy we will not survive.

Schools have curriculum and programs to teach students literacy. The Common Core State Standards provides goals a guide for teachers to teach their students about literature. The standards are broken into sections: Reading: Literature, Reading: Informational Text, Reading: Foundational Skills, Writing, Speaking & Listening, and Language. These all these components make up the literacy instruction for students. Teachers teach students to analyze texts to determine the author's intent. Students must be able to communicate what they are learning by writing an essay or speaking to a peer. Literacy is the combination of the elements taught in school plus the real life application of literacy.

### **Technology and Literacy:**

The National Council of Teachers of English focuses on 21st century learners and what they need to understand in order to be successful. It says global citizens must be able to "design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes." Citizens must be able to receive knowledge and communicate through technology. Technology provides the opportunity for all individuals to learn about anything they want. According to the EDC, Paulo Freire stated that literacy was "reading the word and the world." Knowledge opens opportunities for knowledge, travel, and experiences. Literacy has moved beyond the printed word to digital print.

Overall literacy is changing and evolving based on what the current generation needs to be successful. Literacy is being able to gain knowledge and share their knowledge with others to benefit society. It is not only taught in the classroom, but in everyday life.