

I really enjoyed these two articles about mindsets and literacies. ([Knobel/Lankshear](#) and [Jenkins](#)) I found that they helped crystallize and delineate some of my thoughts, and moved me toward a greater framework of understanding with how people (particularly less experienced people) should be helped to become more “literate” in technology mindsets. They laid out pretty concisely what exactly digital literacy is. I don’t know if this was intentional, but to me, it outlined and explained what is loosely a generational divide in the way that people communicate, and what they view as “normal.” Even though they are not “digital natives,” most people over the age of 40 still use (or are at least familiar with) email, powerpoint presentations, or mobile phones. However, they have not necessarily adopted what Knobel and Lankshear call the “ethos stuff,” that is, the mindsets associated with modern digital technology. To many, those examples (email, powerpoint presentations, or mobile phones) are just modern versions of old technologies.

Even the words we use for these tools can belie our linguistic inertia. When a new and revolutionary technology enters our culture, it rarely enters our lexicon in the same way. Instead, it is given a slightly varied form of an already-existing entity. Mail becomes “email,” Phones become “mobile phones.” While the early versions of these tools were indeed little more than their names suggest, our vocabulary surrounding them has barely been updated. We still apply, as Knobel and Lankshear call it, a “physical-industrial” description to a digital phenomenon. While some of us can utilize our “post-industrial” mindsets when we encounter these terms, and therefore have internalized what they are capable of, many people are stuck in the “physical-industrial” mindset, and still view them as “slicker” versions of what was used 40 years ago.

I believe that the process to bridge the divide between these mindsets should not begin with technology. I don’t think the answer is to simply “be patient and go slowly” and try to keep attempting to teach someone with a “physical-industrial” mindset how to use a particular tool more effectively. There needs to be a way of beginning to open someone to a “post-industrial” way of thinking using only “physical-industrial” methods. Just like when you’re designing instruction for your students, you’re going to have more success changing someone’s worldview if you start with where they are, not where you want them to be.

I have no idea how to do that yet, but my hunch is that it is possible. I am hoping that the next three weeks will help me to either see a way forward on this path, or see that I am wrong, and start me on a different path toward updating mindsets and developing literacies