I’m Dr. Katie Linder and you’re listening to an audio extra for my new book *The Blended Course Design Workbook: A Practical Guide*, available now from Stylus. To learn more about the book and access additional bonus resources, visit the book’s website at bcdworkbook.com.

In this audio extra I’m going to talk a little bit about some of the assumptions we can make about our students and their technology use.

So a lot of terminology has gotten thrown around in recent years about digital natives versus digital immigrants and oftentimes we think about our students as digital natives, purely because of the generation they’re in and the fact that many of them have grown up with computers both in their schools and in their homes.

But one thing sometimes that we don’t think about is that our students have primarily used technology in their personal lives for things like social and talking with their peers and engaging on things like Twitter and Facebook only for the purposes of being social with those around them. And they may not have engaged with technology for the purpose of learning.

Now this is not always the case. A lot of high schools are starting to engage with various technologies and some of them even have course management systems and ipad use and things like that, but the important thing to consider is that we shouldn’t make the assumption that all of our students have engaged with technology for the purpose of learning and they might need some extra assistance in this area.

So here are a few things you can do in your blended course to make sure that your students are going to use the tools in the most effective way for their learning.

The first is to talk with your students about your expectations. Let them know, for example, with a discussion board how frequently they should post, and how long their posts should be, and what kinds of content should be included in those posts, and if they should be talking with their peers, or with you, in the discussion board. All of these kinds of expectations help your students know what it is that they should be doing with that particular tool.

You will also want to offer tutorials when possible to show students the best way to use a tool rather than relying on them to figure it out. And this is especially helpful if you have one or two tools that you’re using really heavily in your course. You might want to start in the first week, giving them a video tutorial walking them through the features of that tool and the kinds of things that they can do with it. And then maybe giving a small practice assignment where they can test it out and you can see if they really understand the tutorial.

Another thing that you can do is post a discussion board thread where students can ask you, and each other, questions about the course technology tools. And this can help you keep all in one place the really confusing things for students about the technology that you’re using in your course and that will also allow you to create resources for the future for students who might be using those technologies in future iterations of the class.

By not assuming too much, we can ensure that all of our students have the best blended course experience possible. Hopefully these tips will be helpful to you as you design your blended course experience.

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You can also learn more about me at my professional website: www.katielinder.work.