

## Introduction

- Digital literacy is extremely important due to the constant evolution of technology. It has been identified as a graduate attribute and a life skill (National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education 2015, pp. x, 40)
- At the academic library desk, students regularly seek technology help in addition to information literacy and referencing support. This study explored their digital literacy in relation to skills assessment and support requirements
- The UNESCO Digital Literacy Global Framework was used as a basis for the skills self-assessment and to provide a structure for interviewees (Law et al. 2018)

## Aim

Investigate how social science students view their digital literacy skills and explore what the academic library can do to support these students to develop their digital literacy skills

## Objectives

- Discover social science students' perceptions of their digital literacy skills in relation to their college work
- Understand the expectations of lecturers with regards to the digital literacy skills of social science students
- Identify current support for social science students from their lecturers and the library in relation to digital literacy skills
- Ascertain students' support and training needs in relation to digital literacy from the perspective of students, social science academics, and library staff

## Methods

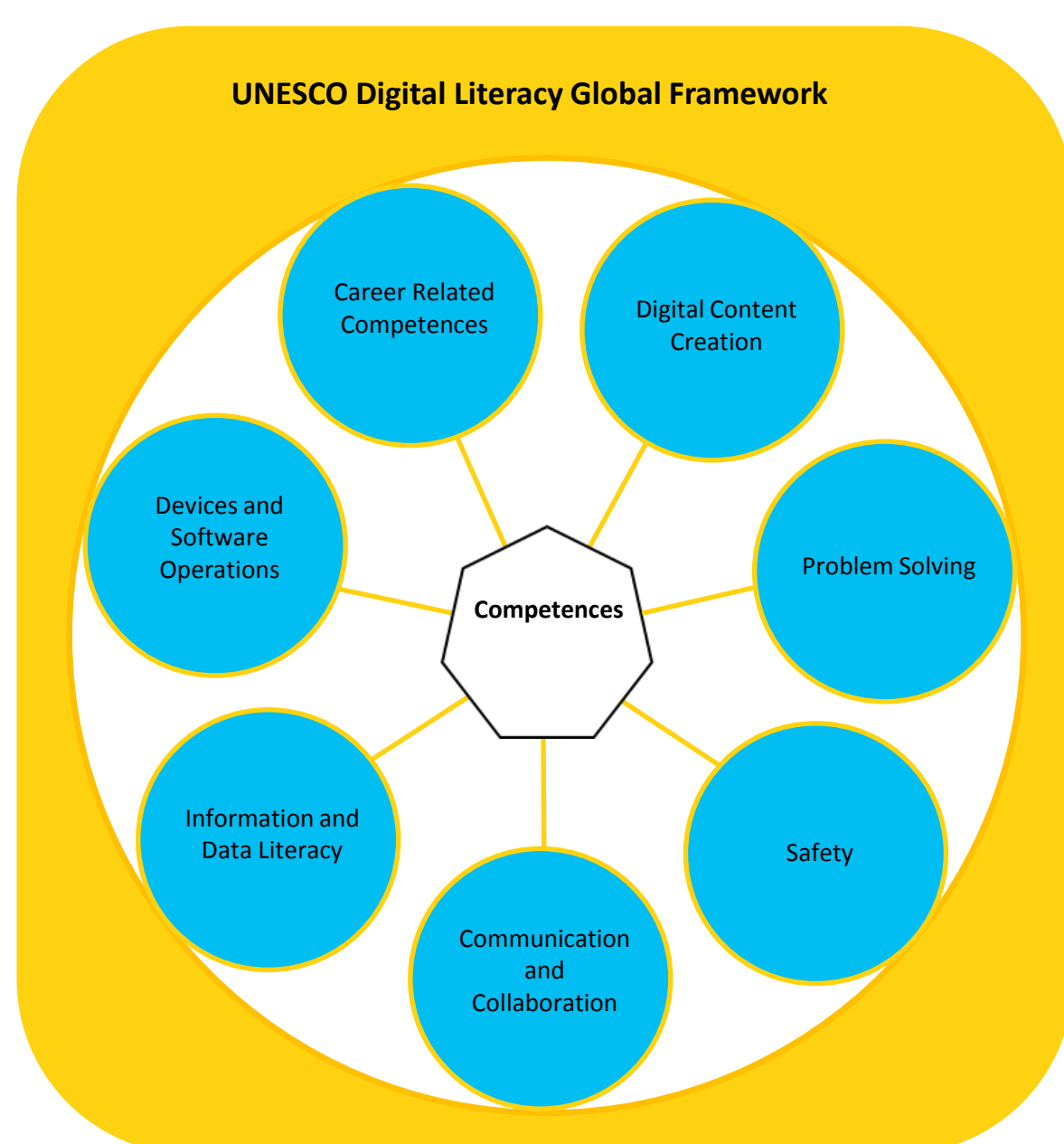


Figure 1: Digital Literacy Global Framework (adapted from Law et al. 2018)

## Findings

### Digital literacy self-assessment:

- The majority of students self-assessed their overall digital literacy at a high level
- Lower levels were reported for information and digital literacy, developing digital content, and digital content creation
- Students with previous computer training did not assess their overall competences at a higher level than other students
- First year students and fourth year students self-assessed at a higher level than second year students
- Students under 24 years of age, the majority of the respondents, self-assessed their competences in devices and software operation; and communication and collaboration at a higher level than mature students did

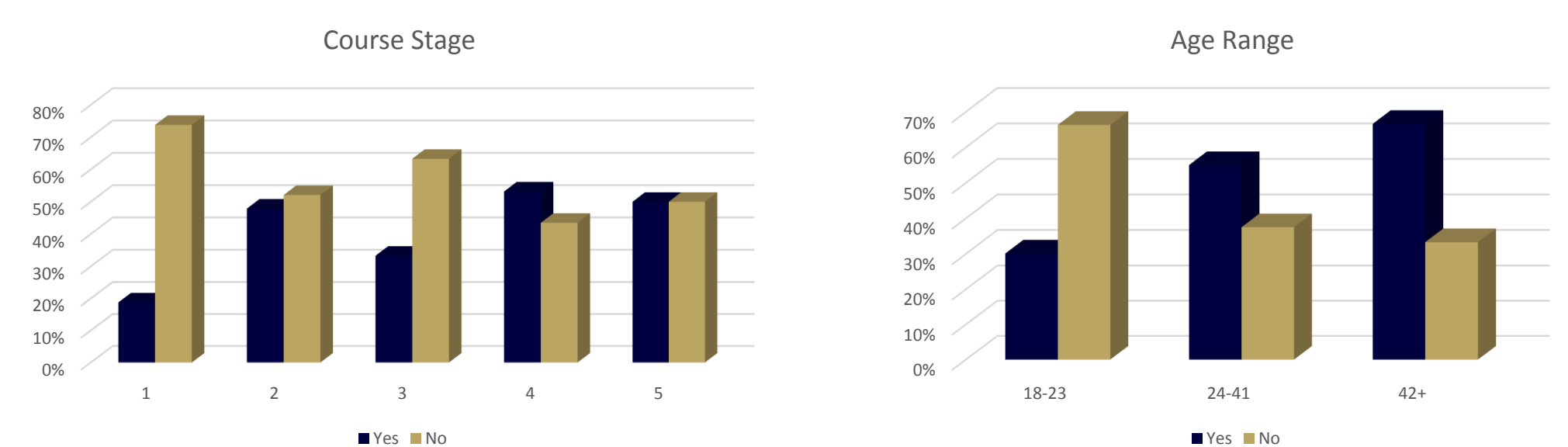


Figure 2: Do students want more library support? (responses by year of study and age)



Figure 3: Digital literacy skills of importance to lecturers

## Conclusions

- Course requirements in the area of digital literacy change from one stage to the next
- Mature students and fourth year students are open to additional digital literacy support
- Digital literacy skill deficits exist
- Previous computer training does not equate to high levels of digital literacy

## Recommendations

- An information and digital literacy strategy to be published by the library
- The development of digital literacy classes, online support and drop-in tutorials by library staff
- The provision of targeted support at second year and for all students at critical times during the year
- The development of a course embedded digital literacy module for social science students

## References

- Law, N., Woo, D., Torre, D. de la and Wong, G. (2018) *A global framework of reference on digital literacy skills for Indicator 4.4.2*. Quebec: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Available from: <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/ip51-global-framework-reference-digital-literacy-skills-2018-en.pdf> [Accessed 23 February 2019].
- National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (2015) *Teaching and learning in Irish higher education: A roadmap for enhancement in a digital world 2015-2017*. Dublin: National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Available from: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Digital-Roadmap-web.pdf> [Accessed 1 March 2019].