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Dominant Narrative

1. All students are digital learners.
2. Digital content, instructional materials, and online and blended learning courses are high quality.
3. Digital instruction and teachers are high quality.
4. All students should have access to high quality digital content and online courses.
Students **ARE** Digital Learners

**Digital Natives**
- Native to technology
- No systematic research
- Makes unfounded assumptions about access to digital technology

**Digital Generation**
- Digital technology has had a profound impact on their personalities
- Based on research circulated on social media sites


Students ARE Digital Learners

• In the 1950s, only 12% of young teens agreed with the statement “I am an important person” whereas by the late 1980s, 80% claimed they were important. (p. 69)

• In 2004, 48% of American college freshmen reported earning an A average in high school whereas in 1968 only 18% of freshmen reported being an A student in high school. (p. 63)

• In 1967, 86% of incoming college students said that “developing a meaningful philosophy of life” was an essential life goal whereas in 2004 only 42% of GenMe freshmen agreed. (p. 48)
## Digital Learning is High Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Digital Learning is High Quality

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<td>Kozma et al. (1998)</td>
<td>The vast majority of online students were planning to attend a four-year college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Espinoza et al. (1999)</td>
<td>Students enrolled are mostly college bound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haughey &amp; Muirhead (1999)</td>
<td>Preferred characteristics include the highly motivated, self-directed, self-disciplined, independent learner who could read and write well, and who also had a strong interest in or ability with technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roblyer &amp; Elbaum (2000)</td>
<td>Only students with a high need to control and structure their own learning may choose distance formats freely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark et al. (2002)</td>
<td>Online students were highly motivated, high achieving, self-directed and/or who liked to work independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills (2003)</td>
<td>Typical online student was an A or B student.</td>
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Digital Learning is High Quality

• “Online student **scores in math, reading, & writing have been lower than scores for students statewide over the last 3 years.**” (Colorado, 2006)

• “Online student scores on statewide achievement tests are consistently **14 to 26 percentage points below state averages** for reading, writing and math over the past four years.” (Colorado, 2011)

• “Virtual charter school pupils’ median scores on the mathematics section of the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination were **almost always lower than statewide medians** during the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years.” (Wisconsin, 2010)

• “Compared with all students statewide, **full-time online students had significantly lower proficiency rates on the math.**” (Minnesota, 2011)

• During both years [2008-09 & 2009-10], **full-time online students enrolled in grades 4-8 made about half as much progress in math, on average, as other students in the same grade.** (Minnesota, 2011)
What We Know From The Research?

1. Today’s students are not as digitally savvy as they are made out to be.

2. Supplemental online learning works for higher ability students.

3. Full-time online learning works for very few students.
What Else Do We Know?

1. Local support is critical to student success.

2. Smaller, targeted programs have shown best results.

3. Managed growth has prevented academic missteps.
Potential Useful Models

1. Requirement to target at-risk or dropped out students. (Michigan)

2. Tying funding to completion and performance. (Arizona)

3. Limiting growth. (Multiple states)

4. Funding full-time K-12 online learning at lower rates. (Multiple states)
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