
Preamble

Our Choice for Our Children: Two Lives or One?

We have a fundamental question to address with regard to educating our Digital Age children. How we answer this question will determine how we plan for and implement education in the broadest sense for many years to come. In its simplest form, the question is, *Should we consider students to have two lives or one?*

Allow me to restate this question with a bit more detail: Should we consider students to have two separate lives—a relatively digitally unplugged life at school and a digitally saturated life away from school—or should we consider them to have one life that integrates their lives as students and digital citizens?

The “two lives” perspective contends that our students should live a traditional educational life at school, much like their parents did, and a second, digital life outside school. It says that the technology that kids use is too expensive, problematic, or distracting to integrate into teaching and learning. It says that issues concerning the personal, social, and environmental impacts of living a digital, technological lifestyle are tangential to a school curriculum. Above all, it says that kids will have to figure out how to navigate the digital world beyond school on their own and puzzle through issues of cybersafety, technological responsibility, and digital citizenship without the help of the educational system.

On the other hand, the one life perspective says it is time to help students blend their two lives into an integrated, meaningful approach to living in the digital age. It says that if schools don’t make it their primary mission to help students understand not only how to use technology but also when and why, then we have no right to expect our children to grow

up to be the citizens we want them to be and that the world needs them to be. It says that if we don't help our digital kids balance personal empowerment with a sense of community responsibility, then future generations will inherit a world that does not represent anyone's dream of what is best for humanity. It says that if we don't understand that schools are exactly the place for kids to learn how to use technology not only effectively and creatively but also responsibly and wisely, then heaven help us all.