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# INTRODUCTION

“Back in my day. ...”

**A**s a child raised in the mid-'80s, I regularly heard this phrase from my own parents. It often followed descriptions of some major short-coming or their lack, as kids, of some resource that we kids took for granted. Things like, “Back in my day, we didn’t have cordless phones. In fact, we had rotary dial phones, and if you had a number with a lot of 8’s or 9’s in it, people rarely called you.”

Another favorite was, “It used to cost us 25 cents to go to the movies, which was like a week’s salary back in my day.”

I look back and laugh at these statements, but as I’m raising my own kids in the 21st century, as well as teaching and working with those in my district, I’m hearing this same “back in my day” phrase uttered by friends, parents, and colleagues more and more. It’s almost as though the pace of change with technology has created this sizeable gap in knowledge between children of the digital age and their parents. I know the term “digital native” is bandied about a lot in educational circles, but I can tell you that it’s largely a myth or excuse used by adults who simply can’t fathom what kids these days are up to.

When we first started down the road of our L.E.A.P. initiative (then called the “Westlake Initiative for Innovation” or WIFI Project), one of the areas of greatest concern came from the parent community. Placing school-issued devices in the hands of kids was much more divisive in some ways than just allowing kids to bring their own devices (BYOD). Although both can be disruptive events, in the case of students bringing their own devices, the disruption is more prevalent in the classroom than in the home. When there is a school-issued mobile device initiative, the disruption is more evenly distributed between classroom and home. In some cases, parents may have opted to not allow their children to have a mobile device, but that’s usurped by the school issuing one for learning.

Whether or not you as a parent agree or disagree with the decision of a school district to provide or allow devices, one thing is for certain: Mobile devices are here to stay. As Linda Rawlings, then principal of our initial 1:1 iPad pilot at Westlake High School, once told me, “That genie is already out of the bottle and there’s *no* way we’re putting it back in.” I think, as parents, we can either reject or accept the idea that mobile devices can be a positive experience for our students’ learning. If you reject this idea completely, then this might be the last paragraph you read in this book. However, if you have some curiosity or inkling of possibility toward the concept of mobile learning, I invite you to read further so that you can gain some tools and perspective on what a mobile learning initiative might mean for your own child.

## How to Use This Book

This book is broken down into various chapters that will serve as both a guide and a resource for parents, depending on the state of the mobile learning initiative at your child’s school. The structure of the chapters in this book mirrors the structure of the other books in the series, though the content is different. Although the intended audience is parents of students in a mobile device initiative, teachers and administrators can also gain some insights throughout on how to support the school community during this process. I’ve often said it “takes an iVillage” to raise a digital child, and that’s certainly been the case throughout the years of our initiative.

The first four books really tackle both the “why” and “how” of mobile learning. Getting leadership on board with encouraging a learning culture and having professional learning that supports the teacher is key. This book is all about the parents supporting a mobile learning initiative at home as well as in the classroom. In the first chapter, we really focus some time and energy on understanding what research tells us about student learning with high-quality technology integration and what benefits come from a school pursuing a 1:1 mobile device initiative.

The second chapter is focused on the top 10 things *not* to do as a parent of a child in a mobile device initiative. Modeling and allowing your child some

room to grow (and at times fail) with mobile devices are some things to not forget. This chapter really begins to outline many of the other chapters throughout the book when it comes to ideas and strategies for integrating mobile learning into your classroom.

Chapter 3 is an interview with Dr. Devorah Heitner (aka @DevorahHeitner on Twitter). Dr. Heitner is the author of several books including *Screenwise* and *Raising Digital Natives*. Devorah has years' worth of research that she describes during her interview, along with helpful tips for parents and educators alike.

The middle chapters cover various intricacies involved when your child has a mobile device, and what that means for their day-to-day interactions. Chapter 4 provides some common vocabulary as well as laying out the concept of digital wellness for ourselves and kids. Chapter 5 focuses primarily on one major aspect of digital wellness, screen time, and how that affects the brain, sleep, and learning.

In Chapter 6, I cover one of the most prevalent issues we face raising kids in this century: social media. Although part of social media is being aware of what is out there, in many cases, behaviors online can be reflective of behavior in real life. (Or “IRL,” as the kids say it these days.)

Awareness of screen time, gaming addiction, and social media pitfalls is only the first step when it comes to really supporting a digital child. In Chapter 7, I give some examples of guidelines and rules I've come across over the years, both as a parent and as someone who speaks with parents on a regular basis.

Although guidelines and rules are effective ways to build and encourage responsible online behavior with our kids, there are times when we need to restrict certain aspects of what they do with technology and mobile devices specifically. Chapter 8 introduces some resources and tools to use when considering internet filters at home and restrictions to place on the device.

In the final two chapters, I tie together the other components of this book series and how they interact with parents supporting a mobile learning initiative. When classroom teachers and campus administrators communicate with parents about tools and resources, this can really stave off any negative

behaviors before they get out of control. Finding resources for professional learning or having conversations with the technology department can go a long way in empowering you, as a parent, to raise students in this day and age.

## “Easter Eggs”

According to Wikipedia, an Easter egg is “an inside joke, hidden message, or feature in an interactive work such as a computer program, video game or DVD menu screen.” Why can't we also have these in books? In this book, I've hidden several Easter eggs that you'll have to uncover and discover. Some are buried in words, others in images. How do you reveal them? If you are reading this book in its paper form, you'll need to download the Aurasma app ([www.aurasma.com/#/whats-your-aura](http://www.aurasma.com/#/whats-your-aura)) and find the trigger images to unlock the Easter eggs. Find and follow the “MLM Vision” channel to make it all work. Instructions can be found here: [mrhook.it/eggs](http://mrhook.it/eggs). Happy hunting!

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