

Digital Natives

Education

The claim that pupils raised on screens learn differently, and why it fails.

The claim

- A generation that thinks differently
- Fluent with any technology by exposure
- Needs a new pedagogy to match
- Prensky, 2001, and widely repeated since
- Used to justify large purchases

The evidence

- No distinct generational cognitive profile
- Skill varies by access and by instruction
- Fluent with social apps, not with documents
- Multitasking harms performance at any age
- Systematic reviews find no support

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Familiarity with phones is not information literacy. Digital skills have to be taught, including to pupils who look confident.

Educational reference. Not supported. The framing has been repeatedly criticised, notably by Bennett and colleagues in 2008.