I am part of the "in-between" generation. I could not say that I am a digital immigrant, nor could I truly say I am a 100% digital native. My generation is a group of "in-betweeners," one of the first generations of digital natives. Born right when the Internet was becoming available for at home usage and computers were in almost every home. Technological innovations have been a part of my entire existence. Even though technically I have never known life without the Internet or technology, I consider myself a part of an "in-between" generation. A generation where technology was fast growing and we were able to witness the expansion over two decades. It is hard to connect to the younger digital natives who have never known life without a Smartphone or tablet.

Although technology has been a part of my entire life, it did not make an educational impact until my late college years. In elementary school, I learned how to work iBook laptops and Apple computers twice a week at Media Center. My junior high and high school experience was more traditional. In junior high, I had Computers class every day for only one semester. In high school, technology was almost non-existent in my classes unless I was writing a paper or making a PowerPoint. The Internet was used for homework and research and I began learning how to search for relevant information. Technology was a separate curriculum and not integrated into every day use.

Even in college, most of my classes were traditional lectures, however, I could bring my laptop to class. Everywhere I would look around I would see classmates on Facebook chatting with friends or checking email. I thought it would be a great idea to bring my laptop to class so I could take notes in a Word Document. However, I quickly realized how big of a distraction it could be and I stopped bringing my laptop. I was starting to resent the fact that technology was literally becoming an extension of one's hand. I would look around campus and all the students had laptops, Smartphones, tablets, and iPods. All seemingly connected digitally, but disconnected in person. At this point, I asked myself, "Isn't learning about collaboration? How can we learn from each other in a course if we are all talking to people who are not in the course?"

It wasn't until I took one of my first Master's classes (TE 831: Technology and Education), that I fully appreciated the idea of technology usage in the classroom. Before this class, I was primarily thinking about the losses with advancing technology usage. As someone who loves the smell and feel of a new book, I was devastated when I heard that many students, my first year of teaching, had never read a book all the way through. But, they could tell me all the latest technology trends and what tech tools they wanted. I noticed that directly correlated to this was my students' attention span. Many of them could not sit and read for a period longer than 15 minutes. When I would ask them to re-read the passage I would get groans and complaints. I was shocked and confused because I did not understand why it was so difficult for 10 year olds to be reading for 10 minutes! Then I asked them what do they do when they get home from school. Many answered play video games, play sports, go on my tablet, play with friends, and watch TV or movies. Most of these options are similar to the ones that I experienced as a child, but no one said, "do my homework" or "read." I felt like the ability to "slow read" like Mark Bauerlein discussed had disappeared in my young students. At that moment, this

realization was one that I could not comprehend. I became an education and technology skeptic.

This skepticism was broaden when I had my students create a PowerPoint presentation and I noticed that they did not have any of the basic computer skills. I also noticed my students wanting instant gratification for their answers. In both my years teaching, I observed my students asking me, "Is this right?" after almost every time they would work on something. After a few minutes of working on a difficult problem, many students would give up trying. Following my reading of Nicholas Carr's *Is Google Making Us Stupid?* I made the connection to why my students want answers right away and why they are lacking problem-solving skills. In *Digital Nation*, problem-solving skills were discussed as one of the most important skills that our students will need in their futures. Could Google and video games be the reason why my students do not seem to have the ability to concentrate and think deeply? Could it be the reason why they want things right now and don't want to have to work for them?

I took TE 831 to help me get out of my technology funk. I knew that technology is not going anywhere and my students will always be digital natives, so I decided to educate myself. In this course, I had to put myself out of my comfort zone. At 23 years old, I was somewhat ashamed of my feelings towards technology. Here I was a young, new teacher and I already was scared of technology in my classroom-something that I grew up with. In this course, I had to use new technologies that I had never used before and I was extremely apprehensive to try "scary" new technologies and use them in my own class! But like Marc Prensky states, "Its' time to give up many of our traditions of literacy and start utilizing the advantages in electronics."

I realized that maybe if utilized correctly, technology could be a wonderful tool for students. All we have to do as teachers is teach our students the correct ways to use it. I was inspired by the portion of *Digital Nation* dedicated to schools in South Korea that were teaching their students Internet safety and "Netiqutte." This is exactly what I would like to do for my students. I was so stimulated by my TE 831 course, that I decided to look into having a 1:1 laptop classroom. I spoke with the head of my technology department at my school district right before Halloween and within two weeks, every one of my students had their very own laptop! I started spending more time researching online tech tools for my students. I began bringing in my own personal iPad to record videos and to set up as a part of math and ELA centers. I monitored my students over the next few months and noticed a complete transformation. Once a classroom with endless questions about what to do, where to search, how to open/save has now become one of online collaboration with the use of classroom social media sites (such as Today's Meet and Schoology) and students who are now expanding my knowledge in technology. Once my digital natives became familiar with the basic concepts, they were not afraid (like I was) to develop their skills without hesitation.

Having a 1:1 classroom was not part of my school curriculum. This was something that I wanted to integrate with my students as my own professional development. Unexpectedly, the 1:1 laptop experience widened my narrow view of technology in the classroom. Noticing the effects of the laptops on my students makes me

wonder how my education would have been different if technology was integrated throughout the curriculum. Now that I am a teacher, having this experience with the laptops has helped me see that technology can have educational value. After having a 1:1 classroom there are many things that I have learned. Patrick Kingsley believes that many people today are "skimming too often, absorbing too little," what if we could teach our students to skim and absorb? Today, many articles are not as long as they used to be. Students have difficulty reading long passages, so why not? From this, I learned that online reading is different than traditional book reading. I will need to teach my students different literacy skills when reading online. Also, I learned that multi-tasking is not a skill that we should be teaching, at least not to my young students. *Digital Nation* focuses a lot on multi-tasking, personally I feel like this is the reason many students lack the sustained, linear attention that Dana Goia discussed. My goal in teaching regards to multi-tasking would be to inform students about how to stay focused on one task at a time in the presence of endless distractions.

Looking back at my transformation from a first generation digital native skeptic to a 1:1 laptop classroom enthusiast, I am able to inquire about my experiences and learn about who I want to be as a teacher. I had the opportunity to reflect back on past events and what led me there. I determined that I was a skeptic of technology at first mainly because I was afraid. That was not the way I learned things, Computers was a separate class, but now computers are no longer a separate entity. I learned that the skills I would be teaching my students are different than the ones that I learned growing up, such as skimming, time management and problem solving.

Although I learned a lot from looking back at my past experiences, there are still some things missing. In other forms of inquiry, I would get other reflections from participants. The events that I discussed happened in the past, they are not fresh in my memory. I didn't keep a journal to help me remember things that my students have said or questions that I had specifically asked them. This form of inquiry is extremely one-sided in that, I am the only one involved. Due to this one-sided view, it is just my reflection of my experiences without any input from others. In other forms of inquiry, the inquirers have multiple resources involved throughout their inquiry process. Autobiographical inquiry is the author telling his or her story to help reflect on how past experiences will effect future ones. Now that I recognize the things that can be improved upon, this will enable me to broaden my future educational inquiries through the use of technology in the every day classroom.

The skills that I learned while in attending school are no longer enough for my current students. Attempting to place my own educational history and experience aside and focusing on the advantages and disadvantages of this generation's technological progress, will help me incorporate the new technologies as they are invented in my classroom. This is an exciting time for me because now as technology grows, I am no longer afraid to grow with it. Utilizing an open-minded perspective regarding technology will allow me to understand the modern challenges that my students will face, which in turn will help me become a better educator for my digital natives.