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## THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY ON YOUNG ADULTS, PARENTS, AND TEACHERS

ladonna schwartz  
lschwartz@murraystate.edu

Ladonna R. Schwartz  
murray state, reneaschwartz@yahoo.com

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THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY ON YOUNG ADULTS,  
PARENTS, AND TEACHERS

By  
LaDonna Renea Schwartz

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## **Abstract**

How is technology affecting adolescents, teachers, and parents. We are looking at the negative and positive effects not only on social media and technology but websites. Discussion of bullying, sexting, and peer pressure. Take inconsideration Tic Tok, Snap Chat, Instagram, and Facebook, most people log on their social media more than once a day, what affect does this have on our work life, social life, home life and life in general. Technology can make education easy or hard. Teachers work with technology every day to make it where students have easy access to homework and notes that are needed. Also, teachers are having to monitor students access to social media and technology which can become hard to do in the classroom. So, we discuss a healthy balance between what is allowed and no allowed in the classroom. Parents now have an even bigger responsibility than ever before, monitoring their children's use of social media and technology. Let's take a hard look at the consequences if social media is used in the wrong way. Technology and social media are not always a negative subject, there is a lot of positive things that can be learned. Interacting with other students' discussion boards, listing homework assignments, and group projects. This paper will discuss all these topics and the advantages and disadvantages of what technology and social media has brought into the world in which we live.

*Keywords:* Social media, bullying, peer pressure, technology

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## Introduction

Have we all let social media and technology run our lives? I will be discussing the pros and cons of social media and technology. The effects it has on adolescents, parents, and teachers. Everyday life consists of some type of social media or technology for all Americans. Communication between adults as well as adolescents has become non-existent, we live in a society where we all depend on social media and technology. Engaging in various forms of social media is a routine activity that research has shown to benefit children and adolescents by enhancing communications, social connection, and even technical skills” (Pediatrics, 2011, p#17).” Some feel that social media and technology is a healthy outlet for everyone, especially adolescents but some physiologists are arguing this idea saying that people depending on social media or technology to satisfy their lives is an unhealthy response.

Parents trying to navigate responsibilities at work, home and family are especially having difficulty with social media or technology and their adolescents. As adults we have to find a healthy balance, for some adults navigating social media is easy while others find it extremely difficult. Many parents today use technology incredibly well and feel comfortable and capable with the programs and online venues that their children and adolescents are using. Nevertheless, some parents may find it difficult to relate to their digitally savvy youngsters online for several reasons (O’Keefe, 2017).

Teachers are using social media and technology in the classroom to assist in lesson planning and teaching content. Teachers also are having a hard time controlling students from using social media in the classroom. The nation’s second-largest teachers union said Thursday it was losing patience with social media apps that it says are contributing to mental health problems and misbehavior in classrooms nationwide, draining time and money from teachers and

school systems (Ingram, 2023). Let us discuss the advantages and disadvantages of social media and technology. Keep an open mind on the best way to regulate this new age of technology and try to find a solution that will fit society. Some people believe that social media has gotten out of hand, and we must reign in usage. Still others believe that there is better that comes from the access of technology and social media than bad. I believe that a healthy balance can be achieved.

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of adolescents with social media.**

What a fast-paced world we live in today, and it is not looking like a slowdown is in the near future. Technology has made our world move at an incredible rate, thinking ten steps ahead and multi-tasking like never before. This is the way adolescents and teenagers are being raised in a society where everything is moving at warp speed, and they are trying desperately to keep up with the pace that is in place. Social media is part of this technology that has become so controversial. Young adults and children are trying to keep up with their daily lives plus keep their tweets, Snapchats and Instagram updates current. Let us take a deep look into the negative and positive parts of adolescents and social media.

### **Advantages of Social Media with Adolescents**

Of course, adolescents and teenagers are going to say that there is nothing wrong with social media, that adults and the government are making a big ordeal out of something that is completely harmless. There are several people and scientists that agree with this, saying that social media is a perfectly healthy way for people to express their feelings and ideas. So we are going to look at the advantages of social media and see what positive ideas and thoughts are being said by experts in this field of study.

Social media sites such as Facebook and MySpace offer multiple daily opportunities for connecting with friends, classmates, and people with shared interests. During the last 5 years, the number of adolescents and adolescents using such sites has increased dramatically. According to a recent poll, 22% of teenagers log on to their favorite social media more than 10 times a day and more than half of adolescents log on to a social media site more than once a day (Child,2005).

This data is obviously outdated. I have worked in the school system for eight years and I also have five children and six grandchildren. So, from personal experience they are logging onto social media way more than ten times a day. Is this dangerous for our children? It all depends on what research you decide to read and believe in.

Adolescents are finding that they can access online information about their health concerns easily and anonymously. Excellent health resources are increasingly available to youth on a variety of topics of interest to this population, such as sexually transmitted infections, stress reduction, and signs of depression. Adolescents with chronic illnesses can access Websites through which they can develop supportive networks of people with similar conditions (Smith,2010).

The mobile technologies that teens use daily, namely cell phones, instant messaging, and text messaging, have already produced multiple improvements in their health care, such as increased medication adherence, better disease understanding, and fewer missed appointments (Boren, 2009).

Given that the new social media venues all have mobile applications, teenagers will have enhanced opportunities to learn about their health issues and communicate with their doctors. However, because of their young age, adolescents can encounter inaccuracies during these searches and require parental involvement to be sure they are using reliable online resources,

interpreting the information correctly, and not becoming overwhelmed by the information they are reading. Encouraging parents to ask about their children's and adolescents' online searches can help facilitate not only discovery of this information but discussion on these topics.

Many forms of social media can help with how adolescents feel about themselves and the world around them. Being exposed to social media gives them a chance to get involved in different activities and meeting new people. Adolescents and teenagers tend to withdraw from situations that are not comfortable to them. Social media gives them an opportunity to connect with people that have the same fears. Technology is such a big part of our world today; it allows people to connect and communicate through a device instead of in person. That allows for security in themselves to reach out to others that may have similar situations in their own lives (Taken,2008).

Social media sites allow teens to accomplish many of the tasks that are important to them offline: staying connected with friends and family, making new friends, sharing pictures, exchanging ideas, and playing games. Social media participation also can offer adolescents deeper benefits that extends into their view of self, community, and the world, including: opportunities for community engagement through raising money for charity and volunteering for local events, including political and philanthropic events (Taken, 2008).

Enhancement of individual and collective creativity through development and sharing of artistic and musical endeavors. Growth of ideas from the creation of blogs, podcasts, videos, and gaming sites. Expansion of one's online connections through shared interests to include other from more diverse backgrounds (such communications is an important step for all adolescents and affords the opportunity for respect, tolerance, and increased discourse about personnel and global issues); and Fostering of one's individual identity and unique social skills (Taken, 2008).



Social media can lead to creativity in young adolescents, they can share their ideas with others and join social groups online. They can choose social groups that have the same interests and some of the same goals. Growth of these very ideas can come from blogs or videos that other people in their group have posted for inspiration. It can expand their thinking into a broader category and level, this could very well lead to a career path in the future. There are so many career opportunities in the world of technology and social media, this computer age is where the world is today, and the younger generation is prepared to embrace the new age of technology.

Social media can also broaden their knowledge of world events and how others perceive what is happening. I have sat in many civics and American history classes where there have been several students carrying out conversations or debates on the events happening in real time. They have been very informed in political discussions; most have read on social media or been in discussion groups where they can express how they feel on how the government is handling our country. Listening to other groups could help make an informed decision or help to stir away from making a bad decision. Staying informed is one of the best ways to grow into a well-rounded individual that can have a broad knowledge on various topics. Choosing for ourselves not relying on others to make our decisions. Young adolescents seem very passionate about their ideas, and what they believe. It has been refreshing to see these young people stand up for what they believe in and to come alive in daily discussions.

Social media can help students to stay connected with their peers. Regarding homework, group activities, class projects or simply connecting with the students in their classrooms. Not all teachers allow their students to complete assignments in the classroom, so being able to connect with classmates outside of school can be essential for success. Group projects that are being done outside of school would almost be impossible if social media was not available for them to

connect with other students in their groups online. This allows students to bounce ideas off of one another and also to assign tasks for each student to complete. This makes each student accountable for his or her part of the project. I agree with group projects because it forces the students to contact their peers. Middle and high school students are using social media to connect with one another on homework and group projects (Taken 2010). For example, Facebook and similar social media programs allow students to gather outside of the classroom to collaborate and exchange ideas about assignments. Some schools successfully use blogs as teaching tools, which has the benefit of reinforcing skills in English, written expression, and creativity (Borja, 2005).

Jobs in technology are at a growing rate. Of course, not everyone is interested in technological jobs but there are a lot of students who are naturally talented in technology. Incorporating social media into the students' lives can allow them to look at other avenues for employment after they complete high school.

### **Positive Effects Social Media on Youngsters**

Social media helps youngsters to stay connected with each other. Useful information can be exchanged over social networking sites. Social networking sites can allow teens to find support online that they may lack in traditional relationships, especially for teens. In a Critical Development period youngsters also go for social networking sites for advice and information. Youngsters can look to social media for getting answers related to their career objectives (International Journal of Computer Applications Technology and Research, 2016).

These are just some of the many positive impacts social media can have on young people. Trying to stay objective about the good and bad parts is difficult. But we need to keep our minds open to both arguments and make sure we make an informed decision on how to move forward.

Most adolescents want adults and peers to think social media is a healthy way for them to express themselves and it benefits their day to day lives. Not everyone agrees with how social media helps to develop the minds of today's youth. Let us take a look at how social media can negatively impact the youth of this world.

### **Disadvantages of Social Media on Adolescents**

Negative effects of social media on society. One of the negative effects of social media is that it makes people addicted. People spend lots of time on social networking sites which can divert their concentration and focus from a particular task. We all can have a hard time focusing on the everyday lives we live. Social media can easily affect kids, the reason is sometimes people share photos, videos on media that contain violence and negative things which can affect the behavior of kids or teenagers. It also abuses society by invading people's privacy. Social lies like family ones also weaken as people spend more time connecting to new people. Some people use their images or videos in social sites that can encourage others to use it falsely. (na, 2016).

Can young people become addicted to social media? What level of addiction to social media is considered dangerous? Absolutely, especially if you have an addictive personality. When you talk about addiction people's mind immediately goes in the direction of drugs and alcohol. That is not always the case there are many types of addiction and unfortunately social media has become one of many. The need to be liked is linked to many addictions, alcoholics have the need to be liked and to be fun to be around, part of their personality is to be the life of the party. Much like a person that is addicted to social media. The need to be liked or to see how many people are following you or liking your posts, not being able to step away from the computer or put the smartphone down, being so scared you are going to miss out on something. Is it really an addiction or just a fascination? There is no way of telling how strong a person's

connection is to social media unless they are evaluated for that behavior. Social media can become more of a habit than an addiction. But habits can be additive. Smoking is a habit but it's additive, same with overeating, drinking, gossiping, etc. So who decides when social media becomes an unhealthy addiction? We need to put some type of regulations in effect to where there is a control on social media.

Young people also can be influenced by the images they see on social media. It is not always sunshine and rainbows, there is unfortunately violence and lude photography that can easily come across a screen or be accessed. Violence seems to be no big deal to most adolescents that play video games or just see it on social media. It's just on a screen, it's not real, no one is really getting hurt. "When I was a child, my father taught us to respect a gun, how to handle a gun, unload and load one, always pointing the barrel down to the ground." We were taken hunting and were taught what animals we could shoot and which ones we could not shoot. We knew that a gun could kill, we did not have tv shows or movies that showed a lot of violence, times were different then. Now children playing these games and watching videos have no clue how to respect a gun or what it can do to another human being. Some people think the reason adolescents do not respect a person's life is because of social media and video games. There comes a time when responsibility needs to lie in the home life of the children. Teaching our children what the consequences of the actions we take are real, and what happens in a video game, social media or television is not real life. If adults do not take part in the responsibilities, then they are not being realistic. Everyone needs to monitor the violence that is happening in our own homes. If we do not, this can lead to a bad situation that can have long-lasting effects on a child's life and possibly the lives of other families.

Privacy, is that even something that any of us have now? Privacy used to be an important part of our lives, now it seems that we do not have an ounce of privacy. Young people do not realize just how important having privacy is to our lives and mental health. Putting your life on the timeline of social media lets everyone into our world. Not everyone is going to be supportive of situations in their life. But we are always looking for reassurance from others that we made the right decision. Why do you people feel the need to be validated by others? Low self-esteem, peer pressure, or just looking for a support system. We have social media, and some people have thousands of so-called friends. These people are just acquaintances not true friends, listening to people you barely know about your problems or situations is not healthy. We should actually be talking to our family and close friends that will listen with an open mind, and not judge.

Depending on strangers for advice or validation can weaken our bond with our family and the ones that truly care about what is going on in your life. The best advice I have heard is to keep your personal business off of social media and value your privacy. Also depending on the people closest to us will help build back my relationships that might need mending.

Teenagers and young adolescents can fall into many traps where social media is concerned. Times have definitely changed from even ten years ago, information is more accessible now than ever before. We all have access to information, being informative or simply keeping up with loved ones or just flat being nosy in other people's lives. Adults can fall into this social media trap so imagine how easy it would be for a young person to get sucked in by the popularity contest that social media can cause. Young people want to be accepted by their peers and be in the popular group. They look for validation in social media, it is sad that one negative comment could cause a major decline in the way a person looks at themselves. Posting a picture online that might not be the most flattering could cause a stir of negative comments, these

comments could cause depression in a young person that might be irreversible. The sad part is, we can monitor the sites our children are partaking in, but we might not know about any negative comments that were made. It is important if we notice a difference in our child's behavior we immediately need to investigate where this change is coming from and why.

All of this can lead to bullying and harassment online. There has always been a certain amount of bullying and harassment in schools, but now it seems to have become easier because children can hide behind a computer screen or phone. How can this be monitored if a child is not willing to tell that they are being bullied? No easy answer at all. Working in the classroom I can monitor the students and make sure they treat each other with respect. But outside of school in the privacy of their own home this is not an easy task. Text messaging used to be the outlet for kids to express themselves whether hateful, helpful, or nice. Phones seemed to be easier to manage and easier to navigate, now we have smartphones where teenagers can hide messages on social media, and we have no idea how to monitor a device that we do not know how it works. The sad reality is bullying not only takes place with kids, but some adults are just as bad. This is definitely about social media, but behavior starts at home and hopefully that message is starting to radiate more and more. Bullying is a learned response; I believe that children will react and mimic what they see adults demonstrate. How can we expect a child to behave correctly if adults in their lives are misbehaving and bullying others. Some parents dominate their spouse or significant other, this teaches our children bad behavior which is carried over into our schools or other social situations. Now let those same children get a hold of a device that has social media capabilities, bullying or harassment gets to a whole different level. They can express it quietly instead of vocally, so they think hiding behind a screen they will not be found out.

Cyber bullying is deliberately using digital media to communicate false, embarrassing, or hostile information about another person. It is the most common online risk for all teens and is a peer-to-peer risk (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2010). Thinking you can hide in secret behind a phone, or a computer screen is now an outdated concept. Law enforcement has technology to track messages from phones and computers, even deleted messages can be retrieved. Unfortunately, this can only happen if someone is willing to tell that there is bullying. Needing to create an environment where a young person can feel completely at ease disclosing information about a peer or an adult.

Although “online harassment” is often used interchangeably with the term “cyberbullying,” it is actually a different entity. Current data suggests that online harassment is not as common as offline harassment, and participation in social networking sites does not put most children at risk of online harassment. On the other hand, cyberbully is quite common, can occur to any young person online, and can cause profound psycho social outcomes including depression, anxiety, severe isolation, and tragic suicide (Hinduja & Patchin 2010).

Depression is something we all battle from time to time. As adults, most of the time we can see warning signs that tell us it is time to seek help from a professional. With young people it is not that easy, we can be aware as parents, teachers, or peers, but unfortunately it is not easy to see those warning signs. Asking, are you alright, and them saying yes, may not give us the true answers of how they are feeling. I personally believe that we have always dealt with teenage depression, but it was handled totally differently. Before social media children were more likely to tell their parents or an adult because of the confidence they felt with the situation being handled. Now there are many forms of social media, one harassment can turn into multiple harassments in a matter of seconds.

Researchers have proposed a new phenomenon called “Facebook depression,” defined as depression that develops when preteens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites, such as Facebook, and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression. Acceptance by and contact with peers is an important element of adolescent life. The intensity of the online world is thought to be a factor that may trigger depression in some adolescents. As with offline depression, preadolescents and adolescents who suffer from Facebook depression are at risk for social isolation and sometimes turn to risky internet sites and blogs for “help” that may promote substance abuse, unsafe sexual practices, or aggressive or self-destructive behaviors (Stroud, 2009).

The surgeon general’s warning about social media comes as the rates of teenage depression, sadness and hopelessness have skyrocketed over the past decade. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, long a proponent of mental health awareness, has issued a warning that social media use is a main contributor to depression, anxiety and other problems in the nation’s teenagers (Edwards & Jackson 2008).

So, what is the answer to the problem? Is the mental health of teenagers at the forefront of the issues we are having? Does anyone have an answer to this rising concern of mental health? We have been working on mental health issues for decades and we have not come very far, not enough facilities for people who need help. Where do most of the people with depression and mental health issues go for help? Most end up on the street or suicidal or in the care of a family member. We do not have the capability or resources to take care of our mentally challenged. We have adults slipping through the cracks so how are we going to take care of our youth?

Murthy calls youth mental health “the defining public health issue of our time,” urging policy makers to help ensure strong safety standards to help protect adolescents and teens from



exposure to harmful content and excessive use. Up to 95% of teens between the ages of 13 and 17 say they use a social media platform, according to the report. About a third say they're scrolling, posting, or otherwise engaged with social media "almost constantly" (Ingram 2008,).

The saddest part of the above statement is that not only is social media affecting the teenagers 13 to 17, but all ages are using social media. It has become such a habit for all of us to check our Facebook, Instagram, snapchat, and etc. Children as young as 4 years old use social media better than most adults. Parents are just as bad at checking their social media as most teenagers. We have become a society that can not seem to live without our social media networking. check emails, bring work home, and be on snapchat and not communicate with our children. These are just a few things we do everyday, with no thought in our minds on how this is affecting our lives everyday. How did we become a society that is so reliable on what others post or say on these platforms? It was definitely a slow process, creeping into our lives little by little, until we did not know a different way of life. Are we all so taken by the ability to communicate with others far away that we really did not see the harm that it would eventually cause to society?

At this point, we do not have enough evidence to say with confidence that social media is sufficiently safe for our kids, Murthy said in an interview. "We have to take action now to make sure that we are protecting our kids." The report pulled together research that found teens who spent more than three hours a day on social media "faced double the risk of experiencing poor mental health outcomes, including symptoms of depression and anxiety (Ingram 2008).

We can ask ourselves how social media plays a role in depression and anxiety in teenagers? That answer in the simplest terms, depression and anxiety are different for each individual. What might trigger these in one teenager might not affect the next teenager. Social

Media affects everyone who uses it, when do we realize that what others say on a platform should not affect our lives. Teenagers and adults alike can let social media get you down and depression, not feeling the best about themselves. Why do we consider what others say and take it literally? Is it time that we do something about unplugging ourselves and our children from social media?

Suicide related to social media. If we do not think this is a real problem, turn on the news and find out this is real and devastating many families every year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 46,000 people in the United States committed suicide in 2020 – that’s a rate of 14 people per 100,000. Among children and young adults ages 10 to 24, the suicide rate is 10.7 per 100,000 and social media is the second-leading cause of death (na, 2020).

One simple mistake can turn a teenager upside down. The latest trend is Sexting. When you send a message or a picture of something inappropriate it never goes away. You can delete the pictures or the messages, but they are always out there. Sending an inappropriate message or picture to another person, they might or might not delete it or show it to someone else.

Sexting can be defined as “sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images via cell phone, computer, or other digital devices (na, 2010). Many of these images become distributed rapidly via cell phones or the internet. This phenomenon does occur among the teen population; a recent survey revealed that 20% of teens have sent or posted nude or semi nude photographs or videos of themselves (na, 2010). Some teens who have engaged in sexting have been threatened or charged with felony child pornography charges, although some states have started characterizing such behaviors as juvenile-law misdemeanors (Gifford 2010). Additional consequences include school suspension for perpetrators and

emotional distress with accompanying mental health conditions for victims. In many circumstances, however, the sexting incident is not shared beyond a small peer group or a couple and is not found to be distressing at all (Stroud, 2009).

There is no definite way, as social media is set up now, to moderate the sexting problem on the web. This needs to somehow be regulated by the technology companies and the government. There are children and teenagers sending messages and inappropriate pictures to people they have met on the web. Having no idea who is on the other side of these messages. It could be a predator or a bully trying to destroy someone's life. What is put on the internet never goes away, it is a permanent imprint on the digital web.

The main risk to preadolescents and adolescents online today are risks from each other, risks of improper use of technology, lack of privacy, sharing too much information, or posting false information about themselves or others (Barnes, 2010). When using various Websites, the internet user can leave evidence of which sites they have been visiting. "Digital Footprint" is what this Web activity is called, it is a collective ongoing record of what the internet user is pulling up on the computer. One of the biggest threats to young people on social media sites is their digital footprint and future reputations. Preadolescents and adolescents who lack an awareness of privacy issues often post inappropriate messages, pictures, and videos without understanding that "what goes online stays online (Gasser, 2010). As a result, future college acceptance and jobs may be put at risk by a rash click of the mouse. Bad behaviors on the internet can lead to making teenagers and children targets for any marketers and fraudsters to target.

Many social media sites display advertisements and banner ads, behavior ads, and demographic-based ads, that target people on the basis of factors such as age, marital status,

education, gender, etc. these influence the buying tendencies of preadolescents and adolescents but also their idea of what is normal. So very important for parents or caregivers to be aware of these behavioral ads, they are becoming more and more prevalent on social media sites. They gather information about people and put-up advertisements that can lure someone into buying what they are selling.

Many online venues are now prohibiting ads on sites where children and adolescents are participating. It is important to educate parents, children, and adolescents about this practice so that children and adolescents are participating. It is important to educate parents, children, and adolescents about this practice so that children can develop into media-literate consumers and understand how advertisements can easily manipulate them.

### **The Role of Pediatricians**

Pediatricians are in a unique position to educate families about both the complexities of the digital world and the challenging social and health issues that online youth experience by encouraging families to face the core issues of bullying, popularity and status, depression and social anxiety, risk taking, and sexual development. Pediatricians can help parents understand that what is happening online is an expansion of these underlying issues and that parents can be most helpful if they understand the core issues and have strategies for dealing with them whether they take place online, offline or increasingly both (Vohra, 2012)?

### **Specific ways in which pediatricians can assist parents include:**

Advise parents to talk to their children and adolescents about their online use and the specific issues that today's online kids face. Advise parents to work on their own participation gap in their homes by becoming better educated about the many technologies their youngsters are using. Discuss with families the need for a family online-use plan that involves regular

family meetings to discuss online topics and checks of privacy settings and online profiles for inappropriate posts. The emphasis should be on citizenship and healthy behavior and not punitive action, unless truly warranted. Discuss with parents the importance of supervising online activities via active participation and communication, as opposed to remote monitoring with a net-nanny program (software used to monitor the Internet in the absence of parents).

In addition, the American Academy of Pediatrics encourages all pediatricians to increase their knowledge of digital technology so that they can have a more educated frame of reference for the tools their patients and families are using, which will aid in providing timely anticipatory media guidance as well as diagnosing media-related issues should they arise.

Pediatricians can also provide online sources for parents and adolescents. Pediatricians can encourage parents to discuss these resources with their Children. Parents and guardians can try to moderate the best they can what is being sent on their child's devices, it is an impossible task. This brings us to the next topic of my paper. What effects are Social media having on Adults/Parents (Vohra, 2012).

### **Advantages of Social Media for Parents/Adults.**

Social media and technology has broadened the scope of our lives and how we approach the world in which we live. Years ago, we could not communicate with one another as quickly as we can now. With a click of a button and the movement of a mouse we can reach just about anyone we want in a matter of seconds. Some say that this has given them the opportunity to reach out to family and friends they have not talked to or seen for years. Opportunities to get reacquainted are priceless. Miles and miles separate people from being able to go for visits or to just talk on the phone. But now with the technology we have we can see people face to face and also with unlimited texting and calling we can talk as long as we want.

It is not just our adolescents that have learned to navigate social media, adults have become increasingly savvy in navigating social media and being able to stay connected with the fast pace of the electronic world. In the beginning of this exploration into the technology world was Facebook, adults of all ages use Facebook as an everyday tool to their lives. We can keep in contact with friends and family but also, we can sell, advertise, gossip, and let our political views be known. It has become a part of the extension of our lives and bodies. You can communicate on a phone, computers, anything that has an internet connection.

Many parents today use technology incredibly well and feel comfortable and capable with the programs and online venues that their children and adolescents are using. Nevertheless, some parents may find it difficult to relate to their digitally savvy youngsters online for several reasons (Jenkins, 2006).

Parents unfortunately lack a basic understanding of social media. Social media is a very important part of our children's lives. But most parents are very knowledgeable on or about social media, they have Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram. This gives a parent a way to moderate their children on these apps or even socialize with them. How old should children be before they are allowed to have social media, cell phones, or any type of technology? There are several studies that show various different ages. I allowed my children to have a cell phone at age thirteen, with only the capability to make phone calls. Slowly as they grew as young teenagers, I introduced texting and then social media. Showing my children, the proper way to use social media was important to me and how they conducted themselves. I thought I was being responsible as a parent.

Most tech companies require users to be at least 13 years old. But nearly 40% of kids between the ages of 8 and 12 use social media (Rosenblatt,nd). Social media companies cannot

be solely responsible for who gets on social media websites. As parents and caregivers, we need to monitor what our children watch and join social media.

As a society we are tuned into the entertainment aspects of these sites. Finding a healthy balance can be just as challenging for adults as for adolescents. We have lost the ability to communicate with others, outside the media world. Communication is a key to success, being able to express yourself through words and the vocal type not the handwritten. We are also allowed more freedom with our jobs and with our families. Parents can work from home now, which allows them to participate more in their children's activities. Being able to schedule your work time around your family has become very convenient. Productivity seems to be higher with some that work from home or only go to the office a few days a week. Parents that seem to be on social media or computers everyday have a more understanding of what their children could possibly be doing online.

We can check our children's grades and their social activities. Keep up with what is going on in their school and activities they can participate in after and before school. Also, social media allows parents to stay in touch with one another, connect with other parents through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. It gives parents a platform to connect with each other. Parents who have children with similar interests can stay connected, also parents can connect with each other if they are having a hard time navigating parenting or navigating schoolwork.

This gives new parents a way to connect with each other and that can help new parents not to feel so alone and more connected to others who are going through the same challenges. Parents can use social media to access blogs, papers and videos that could give helpful tips and advice on how to navigate parenting. This information can be particularly helpful to parents who are doubting their ability to monitor their children's behaviors. Parents can stay connected with

the parents of their children's friends, asking questions, and learning the types of people their children are around.

Live conversations with other parents can help if you need help with homework or social situations at school. Social media helping parents to stay connected to their children and to other parents can be a helpful tool to navigate this world we live in today (Ogunsine,2023).It is possible that your child has at least one social media account before you do. It is also highly likely that you are not following each other or friends on social media, which is so sad. There is no way to exile social media entirely from our lives so we should try to benefit from it properly. Parents and adults have this huge opportunity to connect with their children on a whole new level, which should be very exciting. Children are learning to express themselves and balance their lives, as parents we have a huge opportunity to connect with our children. We can be up to date with our children. We can see who their friends are, keeping up with the content they are interacting with. Having this new approach to parenting and connecting with our children is quite beneficial.

Parents who are tech savvy can keep up with their children's progress at school, as well as their social behaviors and mental status. Being able to keep up with how your child is doing at school is easier now than ever before, with the click of a button you can access grades and any problems your child may have at school. Teachers use technology to stay connected with their students and parents. It is so much easier now than before for parents to keep track of their children's progress.

### **Disadvantages of Social Media on Parents/Adults**

Today's parents are living in a fast-paced world, between jobs, household chores, bills, extracurricular activities, and just everyday stress, it is easy to get caught up in the escape of



social media. Almost like a make-believe world, where we can relax and escape from the things of everyday life. Everyone would like to escape the busy lives we have and just take a moment to breathe. The escape used to be television, a certain show or shows that could allow you to get away from the real world. Now things have changed and become easier to escape, a phone in your hand or a laptop or computer at your fingertips, we can transform our lives in a matter of seconds. Are parents allowing these devices to interfere with the day-to-day lives of parents and children? While social media holds many positive impacts and benefits for parents and adults, it also has its downsides. Dependence is one of the most significant problems of social media, adults have become reliant on technology in their daily lives. Adults can also spend an excess amount of time on social media where it becomes a dependence, not thinking of the time it is taking away from our daily activities. This can have a deep impact on our relationships with others, especially our children. Excessive use of social media can cause a decline in productivity, loss of focus, lack of sleep and stress. All of these can affect our relationships with our children, peers, and parents.

Cyberbullying can happen to adults just as much or as often as in adolescents. Social media provides a platform for bullies to hide behind. This cyberbullying can have a long-term effect on parents as well as children. Parents must keep track of their children's social media. Try to see any signs of bullying, sometimes children hide their feelings well and you would never know what was wrong until it was too late. There has always been some type of bullying, but before technology we always knew who the bullies were, now they hide behind this digital mask and pretend that they are the good ones.

Another negative impact is where social media depicts people as happy, wonderland people living in a fairy land, in which could not be further from the truth. Everyone's lives have

certain problems, and it is so easy to forget we are all on the same playing field. Technology has made it too easy for kids to pick on others (Qgunsina, 2023).

Bullying can have long lasting effects on parents and children. Most people do not want attention drawn on them, so they hide the fear and the resistance they have for others.

Oversharing information is another negative effect of social media, parents tend to overshare information about their children and their selves. Misinformation can be dangerous, not having the entire handle on a situation and putting out comments that can negatively affect others as well as their own family. It can also be a privacy issue, it can lead to embarrassment for the child, so sharing personal information as little as possible is the best. Technology can also lead to activities that are not suitable for adolescents. Adults can become just as independent on social media as a child.

Limiting the use of social media at home is a starting point for a healthy home life. Limiting the use for adults as well as children, this can help with more interactions between parents and their children. Parents should lead by example by being more disciplined about the time they spend on social media.

Spending more time being productive outside social media, developing physical activities and habits, this will help to increase the self-consciousness of staying off of social media. Unfortunately, parents cannot be everywhere all the time, to monitor their children on sites that are considered to be unhealthy. Parents should have access to their children's social media accounts and be able to access them at any time and often to make sure they are doing everything possible to keep their children safe.

You cannot be friends with everyone on social media, it is not a platform to see how many people your friends will be. Healthy real-world relationships are still the best for everyone.

Face to face interaction is still the best way to communicate with others. There are some people who will take your value from you without the knowledge that it is being done without your consent.

Reduce time on social media, even if you must set an alarm or a timer, so you will not stay on any site too long (Ogunsia,2020).

If we overuse social media, what does it take away from our lives? Addiction is real and an adult or parent can become just as engrossed in social media as an adolescent. We are losing a lot of valuable family time, we are losing watching our children grow, playing with them, listening to them and having a great one-on-one relationship. We also need resting time when we are not looking at what someone else is doing or posting on social media. Surfing the web or social media for long periods of time does not constitute rest.

Social media can cause low self-esteem in children as well as adults. Looking constantly at what others have and comparing it to what you may or may not have, this is not healthy. Parents have no idea if someone on social media is embellishing what they have or what their children are doing. They cannot continually compare ourselves to others.

Fifty-two percent of parents that were polled have felt at some point uncomfortable with the way their teen behaves or portrays themselves on social media. Of that group, the primary concern has been what the parents call a lack of privacy (Lurie, nd). People only tend to post the best parts of their lives and not the parts that could be controversial or even less attractive.

Have you ever seen someone post a picture on a site that is unattractive? People don't always want to put their best foot forward and show the best side of themselves. This is such misinformation; we are not always at our best. Being as true to ourselves as we can allow others to see us at face value.

Adults and parents need to learn how to communicate with their children, peers, and other people in society. We have lost our ability to carry on a conversation with anyone. We are so used to texting or messaging, how many times do we actually pick up the phone to make a call, most of the time it is to text or get on social media. We are raising a generation of children who have no idea how to communicate with each other unless it is through texting or messenger. What are the generations to come going to look like will they be able to communicate at all? Taking time out of our day to actually talk with our children is one way to start the communication process. Children want to be talked to about their day and in general how their lives are going.

Again, we as parents need to make sure we set the best example for our children. Limiting our time on social media and increasing our time with our loved ones. It is always hard to start a new healthy habit, but it can be done. Increasing our family time can increase the love and admiration we have for each other and set an example for our future generations to follow.

So, we as teachers and parents can help our children to deal with setbacks and how to get them to move past them. Positive attitudes go a long way, it is contagious. Seeing a positive attitude in others can radiate to our children. So, what are some ways we can show positivity?

Sometimes life throws unexpected curveballs and setbacks—from minor obstacles like receiving a low grade on a test or getting in a fight with a close friend, to much more significant ones like serious illness or loss. And these are just a few examples of setbacks in life. These obstacles are difficult for everyone, but they can be especially tough for students who are just learning who they are and how to balance their personal lives with schoolwork (Lester, 2023).

Many children are returning to classrooms after experiencing two years of Covid-19 related uncertainties—lockdowns, social distancing, remote learning, cases spiking then waning

then spiking again. So, it isn't surprising that, in addition to learning losses, surveyed educators are noting that students have also fallen behind socially and emotionally (Mann, 2021). Saying in effect that the pandemic's disruptions have negatively impacted the already fragile self-confidence and self-esteem of the children in their care.

Understandably, parents everywhere are worried about their student's ability to bounce back from these unprecedented times. Studies have shown for decades that children lacking self-esteem will be reluctant to try new or challenging things because they're afraid of failure and disappointment. That anxiety and habit of withdrawn passivity can end up holding them back as they grow older and even come between them and a successful career (Newman, nd).

Of course, the opposite can also be true. Children who have high self-esteem tend to tackle the challenges they face more readily, have more success in school, and typically experience fewer personal and behavioral issues over time. Unfortunately, for parents, helping your child build that self-esteem can be tricky. Simply praising won't be enough and overpraising children can do more harm than good. Raising a confident child will require more than compliments. Your kids will need help developing the skills to overcome challenges. Children gain self-confidence and self-esteem slowly over time. It begins to develop when they feel safe, loved, and accepted, then it grows as they receive positive attention for being able to do more things by themselves. Kids feel better about themselves as they use new skills, and that burgeoning self-esteem is nurtured by parental attention, by letting kids try, then showing pride (Araujo, 2023).

One of Connections Academy's certified school counselors, Karen Muston, put it this way: "You can help your child feel more secure by reminding them that it is perfectly okay to fail or to be imperfect, since the best learning experiences happen through our failures. Make it a

norm to talk about the challenges and failures on a regular basis and reframe those as a positive experience.”

Coming up with the right words to say when your child is upset and lost might stump you. Consider the following positive reminders and advice to offer your students to help them cope when, in their world, everything seems to be going wrong.

It can be hard for kids to understand pain in the moment, just as it is for anyone. But when you take the time to sit down and discuss what’s going on with your child, you can provide some reassurance by explaining that although something is bringing them down now, setbacks often come with a meaningful purpose or a lesson. For example, if your child did poorly on a test or received a bad grade, this may be a subject they need to work harder at or that something in their schedule needs to shift. It’s all about how we learn from setbacks.

If your child is going through a tough time, remind them that it won't last forever. Each day is a chance to start fresh. Making the best of the situation is a much better option than dwelling on it and growing increasingly miserable.

When your child is dealing with a setback, remind them to take care of themselves. Go outside and get some fresh air. Plan something fun to look forward to. Or simply go get ice cream just because. Help them see that there is more to life than focusing on what’s going wrong, and it’s important to continue to create your own joy.

There’s a time and a place for healthy venting and asking, “What can we do to make a change?” but your student worrying and complaining too much about a setback can be a waste of energy and time. Encourage your child to change whatever it is they don’t like by doing something about it instead, if possible. Help them brainstorm possible solutions and put them into action.

A little gratitude goes a long way, especially when figuring out how to handle learning setbacks. As a positive reminder for students, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness, according to positive psychology research from Harvard Medical School. Try these “5 Gratitude Activities for Students” to help your child build a sense of gratitude (Austin,2022).

Let your student know that these are not mishaps but, rather, opportunities for something even greater. Perhaps your student didn't make a sports team, didn't get accepted into their first-choice college, or didn't get hired for a dream job. Remind them that rejection can open the path to a different team, school, or job that is just as—if not more--suitable and fulfilling.

Unfortunately, your child is going to come across negative people throughout their life. When this happens, emphasize the importance of tuning out the negativity and remaining optimistic. Negativity causes unnecessary despair. Encourage them to seek out positive friends and role models (Austin, 2022).

Positive reminders and thoughts are also beneficial for your health. Researchers continue to explore the effects of positive thinking and optimism on health, which include lower levels of distress; greater resistance to illness; better psychological and physical well-being; lower rates of depression; and more—according to the Mayo Clinic (Mayo Clinic Staff, nd).

It's easy to get caught up in things that really can't be controlled. If your child is holding onto unhappy thoughts, suggest accepting it, letting go, relaxing, and letting life happen. Convince your child to take chances and trust their instincts, even if the outcome is unpredictable.

Life is going to continue no matter what hardships come along, so why not inspire your student to muster the courage to continue with it? Pose the question, "Wouldn't life be boring if

it was really easy, and you didn't have to work for anything?" Comfort your child by clarifying that these tribulations often make people better and stronger. Basically, anytime your children learn new things or try new things, the experience can boost their self-esteem, even when they fail. Here are a few examples of esteem-building opportunities: By making progress toward their goals.

### **Advantages of social media and technology on teachers**

Pencils and paper have become an outdated concept where education is concerned. Chalkboard, teachers lecturing and giving examples on the board, simple times, less complicated. Did Children learn faster or better with what is called the old school method, long division, memorizing multiplication tables, reading books and writing short stories? Longing for a time when school was school and not a gossip or place where children were treated differently because of social status.

It has become a lot more complicated how the classroom is handled. Technology has ruled over the classroom, students are expected to be able to keep up with the fast-paced teaching style that technology has introduced. Let us look at positive aspects of technology in the classroom and how it helps teachers to be more efficient in the subject matter that they are teaching.

Compared to textbooks, experts believe that technology can increase student interaction and engagement. Technology is already integrated into every student's life. Students feel much more comfortable using devices that they are already familiar with in their day to day lives. Some students might feel intimidated by the new technology out there, they might not have the same advantages at home with technology as other students. So, allowing those students extra time in the classroom to become more familiar with the devices and technology that the



education field is requiring them to know. Making sure all students have the same equal advantages as all the other students.

In the Classroom now all students have the same opportunity to participate in activities. Teachers have various programs that are used in the classroom to assist the students in learning the curriculum. Students can share their thoughts and respond to teachers' questions in various different ways. Teachers can include games which can enhance the learning process. This encourages more fun for the students.

Technology opens new avenues for the learning process. There are several apps that range from English to Science and students can download material that they can use to study the subject matter. There are puzzles, word searches, quizzes, and multiple games that are free to the teachers as well as the students.

Not all students learn the same way, some students are hands-on learners and others are visual learners. Technology can allow students to stimulate their minds by simply the click of a button. Using technology can help students to write more efficiently and give the teacher an advantage of seeing how their students are progressing.

Technology allows more collaboration in the classroom. Students can share their work with teachers and peers with Google Doc, Slides, Canvas etc. What is most effective is the teacher being able to see their work in real time. To follow along with your students to see what they are working on and to make sure that they are staying on task. It becomes easier to help students and to see who might need extra help with tutoring.

Technology can boost productivity for students as well as teachers, with built-in tools that are a finger motion away. It allows teachers and students to create high quality presentations with well researched papers. Technology encourages teachers to find more creative ways to present

lectures that will grab the attention of their students. Any topic can be found on the internet, with plenty of resources to make better classroom settings for students.

With students spending only a limited amount of time in the classroom, teachers must connect with students outside of the classroom. With apps teachers can explain a topic more thoroughly using Google Classroom. Google Classroom has become a most intricate way of connecting with students, being able to put classroom notes and homework online allow students to work on things at home if they do not have enough time in the classroom to finish their work they were assigned. The only downside is not everyone has access to the internet at home and will not be able to connect to Google Classroom. But for those that are able to access the internet they can download videos and other resources to clarify the content that was lectured on in class. This is a huge advantage to students who need to go over the content in a more peaceful sitting. It also gives the parents the advantage of listening to the lectures and being able to help or explain something their child is not understanding.

Paperwork was the only way before to communicate with students and parents alike. Unfortunately, paperwork gets misplaced, lost, or simply not taken home. Paper has now become a thing of the past; we can do so much more with the technology we have at our disposal. Now we have the capability to email or go through an infinite campus to relay messages to students as well as parents. Parents can get a look at the progress of their child and see what they are excelling in or lacking in. Homework can be submitted online, and grades are put up online. This has made it so much easier for teachers to keep track of their students' progress, if something is late or missing it is able to be seen quickly and addressed. There are still teachers who hand out papers in the classroom because there are some students who do better with the idea of an assignment on paper.

Teachers are helping students to prepare for the real world, companies are looking for people who can navigate the web easily and proficiently. These are life skills that students will need in the future and workplace. Even if a student does not go into a field where computer skills are necessary, they will have the ability to help their own children.

Chalkboards are definitely a thing of the past, today they are smart boards. Teachers can project presentations, slides, textbook examples easily and quickly. Some students are visual learners so being able to do this can help them achieve success in the classroom.

Learning is no longer passive; it is an active response in and out of the classroom. Students want to learn in an environment that is more interactive, and this is helpful to a teacher who wants their student to be engaged. Lecturing is a small part of the learning process. It is not just handing out homework and teaching on the topic, to keep students' attention teachers have to be more inventive with their style of teaching. That means more hands-on learning with the students.

Technology has helped teachers because students want to see their progress without asking questions, being able to pull up their own grades and to know what they need to make their grades better can cause them to be concerned about paying more attention in class and doing better with their classwork.

Every student is different, it is so complicated to ensure that each student is getting the individual attention they need to succeed. Technology helps teachers to better understand what each student needs to achieve the best possible grade out of class. Some students are visual learners while others are more hands-on. Technology can definitely allow both styles of learning to be taught in one classroom with one teacher. Once the teacher has a grasp on each student's

style of learning they can download information that can help achieve the goals set for that particular subject.

Repetition has always been a great learning resource. With the ability to download information that stays on the Google Classroom, students can do the exercises over and over to grasp the concept of what is being taught. Instead of handing out multiple papers to each student to go over the same concept, teachers can download the information and the students have the ability to go over it as many times as they feel necessary.

There are also the students who have special accommodations. Technology allows teachers to modify assignments, lessons, and tests for any child with special accommodations. Using the technology to do this allows the students to stay in the classroom and not have to be pulled out, they can have the extra time to do the assignments without any other students knowing that they have a 504 plan.

Social Media is another way teachers can communicate with other peers and collaborate with other schools and teachers. Teachers need support also, even the most talented teachers can have some subjects that are not their strongest points. So, with social media they are able to have the support and knowledge of their peers. It also provides endless ideas that can help to keep the attention of their students. Trying to stay creative in the classroom can be a difficult task. Not only are you competing with what is going on outside of the classroom but also with other extracurricular activities.

Social media can let teachers come together as a community. Educators have one of the toughest jobs in the world. They must have a deep passion for what they do and know that they hold our future in their hands as educators.

As an educator we have to be diverse in the perspective of the world. Social media allows teachers to see different perspectives of how situations are handled differently in other classrooms. Social media lets teachers express themselves on the joys of teaching. Being able to lift the spirits of other teachers who might be having a difficult time and just need a positive outlook.

Partnering with other schools in academics is important. Content sometimes can get overwhelming and having teachers at other schools as a sounding board can be such a great tool. Teachers have to have many different tools in their toolbox to handle the variety of situations they come in contact with on a daily basis. Knowing that there are resources available to help get through a situation or a classroom problem is so helpful and knowing that as a teacher you are not the only one who has crossed this path.

Social Media can also allow students to communicate with teachers and ask questions, content related, that they might feel uncomfortable asking in the classroom in front of their peers. Teachers are sounding boards not only for other teachers but for their students. Students that are having difficulty expressing themselves can feel more comfortable with a one on one sitting with their administration or teacher. Children that might be bullied at school will come nearer to telling an administrator or teacher on a social media platform than in person. Teachers letting themselves be open to hearing a child and trying to help resolve a problem are the unsung hero. In today's society some children do not have the support outside of school to help them get through the most difficult situations.

Social Media can also help teachers to share news of what is going on in the school or any school related news. Posters or signs put up at school sometimes go unnoticed, whereas on social media kids are constantly looking at and can keep up with what is happening in school.

Promoting any type of school events could be very beneficial on social media where even parents or anyone in the community can participate.

Schools are pressed for funds for extracurricular activities so there are so many fundraisers to help the schools to achieve the funds they need. Social media is a good outlet for students to get their fundraising projects out there. The teachers and parents can also help by sharing information on social media so their friends can participate also.

As students get ready to graduate from high school, teachers can use technology to help students design a resume, either for college applications or the workforce. LinkedIn is a good resource for creating a resume. The professional networking platform is mostly used by people in the post-school workforce, so high school students may not even be aware yet. However, whether they decide to attend college or not, learning how to market their skills and build a professional network can help students navigate the job market after graduation. LinkedIn is also a great place to find articles and other resources to help young professionals build their industry knowledge and skills.

Another great social media platform for teachers to use is Instagram. It is a visual platform that teachers can use to share updates for administration to post updates for students. Teachers can create class-specific accounts where they post assignments, instructions, resources, and more.

Teachers that are looking for great ideas for projects Pinterest is the place. This is an excellent tool for sharing visual resources like infographics, artistic inspiration, tutorials or examples of finished projects. Many teachers use Pinterest to collect and organize their own lesson ideas, so creating a board where students can pin their own resources encourages collaboration and learning ownership. While students of all ages respond well to visuals,

Pinterest may be particularly popular with younger students who are still practicing their reading skills. While fewer school children are using Facebook today, it can still be a useful tool for maintaining an online community, posting updates, sharing links, and asking questions.

Facebook can be used to organize specific projects, communicate with classes, form student clubs, plan events and more. The instant group chat function can facilitate real-time discussions. Facebook live enables teachers to lead virtual lessons, stream lectures and hold Q & A sessions. As administrators, teachers can set Facebook groups to private or invite-only to maintain a safe space for students.

Twitter can serve as more of a bite-sized message board where teachers can post short project updates, announcements, links to helpful resources or answer students' questions. The platform can also serve as the basis for lessons in using concise language, since each post is limited to 280 characters. A valuable skill for both essay writing and future professional communications. Teachers can create dedicated handles or hashtags for each of their classes and invite both students and their guardians to follow along.

Blogs can be useful tools for language learning, whether that is practicing how to craft a five-paragraph essay or improving one's French writing skills. But this long form writing platform can also be used to track students' progress in any subject. For example, have chemistry students write biweekly posts summarizing everything they have learned in class, and ask them to revisit and write about certain topics once a semester to practice knowledge retrieval. These posts can also serve as test prep and reminders of any concept's students may need to review.

Promote student achievements: You and your students put in a lot of work during the school year — share your accomplishments with the community! If your school has a public social media account, provide the account manager with information about your class's latest project or an

upcoming showcase so members of the community can see what students have been up to. Not only does this give students an opportunity to show off their work, but it also serves as promotional information for anyone considering enrolling their own children in the school (Kenan,2023).

### **Media and Technology in the Classroom**

Social media can be a major distraction in class, especially if students are accessing their personal accounts independently. Private side conversations, off-topic activities and mindless scrolling can all happen when students are granted in-class internet access. If students primarily use social platforms to participate in class discussions, they can miss out on practicing face-to-face conversations and respectful in-person discourse. Some students may see social media assignments as an opportunity to cyberbully their classmates, so it's critical that teachers set firm ground rules about responsible social media use.

There is always a risk of a group member posting inappropriate content or language, since it is difficult to manage how students use social media platforms independently. Teachers must be responsible and attentive administrators to prevent and address inappropriate behavior.

Smartphones have a bad reputation in classrooms and there have been strong cases for banning them in schools. However, bans on devices such as smartphones are unlikely to work as students will inevitably get around them. Also, such bans would be resented by students, who consider the use of technology to be a matter of personal autonomy that should only be regulated when it distracts other students. While teachers can help students learn better self-control methods to help them to regulate their own use of devices, research shows that better lesson plans that promote student engagement have less off-task use of technology (na,2020).



Therefore, the onus is on instructors to create engaging, inspiring, and stimulating lesson plans that incorporate technology. For example, smartphones can access educational apps that promote learning as well as time management. Many teachers incorporate digital platforms into lesson plans and find that using social media can actually keep students engaged and encourage classroom participation. Some teachers even create twitter hashtags to encourage comments (na,2020).

### **Disadvantages of Social Media and Technology in the Classroom**

Is there even a downside to using social media and technology in the classroom? It's easy and convenient to pick up a computer, log on and start doing your work. But are we missing out on some basic concepts of learning? Are we losing a one-on-one relationship with classmates and teachers? Is there a way to incorporate technology and one on one learning, can we blend the two? Some children thrive on the attention of a teacher instructing their students, not just saying pull up Google Classroom and go to assignment 11. Having a teacher lectures their students and have question and answer periods, this is where students get engaged in the classroom.

Secondary Education Classrooms are beginning to look like online college courses, where everything is done online and there is no one on one communication. Then we wonder if students will get depressed and dread coming to class. We need to take a harder look at how our classroom looks now, and how we can choose to make the atmosphere better. Getting children excited to come to school, excited to learn, let's face it if not every subject is going to be their favorite, but if we change how we are approaching those difficult subjects maybe the interest will grow.

A chalkboard, piece of chalk and an eraser, those were the tools used in the classroom. Going outside to do experiments, nature walks, physical education classes. The classroom was

simple and not at all complicated, now look at how far we have come. Teachers have a whole new way of instructing their students. Some parents think it is terrible that there is not as much one on one with a teacher as before. So let us look at some university studies that can help us determine if the course of action we are on in the classroom is the proper way to reach students.

Like a drug, social media is addictive. Watch out for negative effects social media may be having on your mental health. These include increased anxiety around your job or feelings of inadequacy compared to other teachers. The next time you log onto professional social media sites, pay attention to your reaction (Sep 18, 2017, na). To a certain degree, the damaging effect social media can have — particularly on young people — is nothing new. But in the decades since the introduction of MySpace and the eventual rise of Facebook and Instagram, there are clear indications it's only getting worse. A recent deep dive into Facebook's operations, by the Wall Street Journal, revealed the company is well aware of its platforms' negative influences on the mental health of users — a sizable percentage of those being young ones. To a certain degree, the damaging effect social media can have — particularly on young people — is nothing new. But in the decades since the introduction of MySpace and the eventual rise of Facebook and Instagram, there are clear indications it's only getting worse. A recent deep dive into Facebook's operations, by the Wall Street Journal, revealed the company is well aware of its platforms' negative influences on the mental health of users — a sizable percentage of those being young ones (Horwitz,nd).

Teachers and youth mental health advocates are quick to point out that social media use is not a direct cause of increased negative behaviors, which can also stem from other problems in kids' lives. There is plenty of good to be found on these platforms, they add, and kids need to be taught the proper and healthy way to use them. But they also agree that the negative aspects of

social media — the addiction of seeking “likes,” the self-isolation it can promote — need to be addressed.

“For those kids who are struggling at home, maybe they have low self-esteem or other things like that – this medium is so difficult on them because they already feel disconnected,” said Johnson. “They already feel like they don’t fit in. And this just makes them feel more so.” There is an urgent need for mental health support in schools for students and teachers as well. Carl Hofbauer has spent the past five years as a student counselor at a fine arts school in Langley, B.C., after over a decade of classroom teaching. He remembers sitting in on a music class this past year when he noticed just how much smartphones have invaded young people’s lives (na, 2020).”

“(The students) were playing this Stravinsky piece — a pretty tough piece,” he remembers. “And one of the students ... she had her phone on her music stand, and she’s scrolling through it ... then she would play her part, and then go back to her phone.” Hofbauer notes the phone was next to the student’s sheet music. “It just seemed so amazing to me, that in the middle of playing this beautiful music, some of these kids are still finding ways to disconnect.” After transitioning to a position where he’s now intimately involved in students’ mental health struggles and anxieties, Hofbauer says it didn’t take long before he began feeling overwhelmed — not just by the issues he was confronting, but by how many students he was counseling at a time. “I have 500 students in my caseload, and if 20 of them are dealing with issues at home or severe mental health struggles, you just can’t be proactive,” he said. “You’re putting out fires instead of actively counseling these kids, which is what they need.” Other teachers agree with Hofbauer that there is what Johnson calls an “urgent need” for more mental

health resources in schools, including adding more counseling staff. Emily Jayne, who teaches Grade 8 at a Vancouver private school but spent eight years prior teaching high school in the United States, says she's seen in both countries how mental health has worsened — and how social media has played a role.

“It’s just this constant, consistent access to information that’s leading kids to become more concerned about climate change, more concerned about politics, and how the world is changing,” she said. “It’s made their lives so much more stressful, and that has led to a change in how they behave for sure.” Without those additional supports, Johnson says it’s often been left to teachers and other school staff to respond whenever those mental health struggles spill over. “There have been fights, the police have been called on occasion ... and often the dispute or the outburst can be linked to something on these apps,” Johnson said. “It comes down on our shoulders a lot and we are stretched. And we just don’t know what to do anymore. So you just kind of start to shrug your shoulders and go, I don’t know. I don’t know.

Data shows worsening crisis, but experts are divided. In their most recent [annual student drug use and health survey in 2019](#), the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Ontario — where there are nearly as many K-12 students as Quebec, Alberta and B.C. combined — found “suicidal ideation and serious psychological distress” were at an all-time high for students (na,2019). Students feel more pressure now than ever before having to compete to get scholarships and placement of class scores. Some students react to pressure in a positive way that motivates them to succeed, while others feel the pressure in a negative way that could lead to

depression and mental anxiety. This can be easy to miss as a teacher, administrator or parent. Symptoms of anxiety or depression were also found to be on the rise steadily among students in Grades 7 to 12, with over one in five students reporting “serious psychological distress” — double the rate it was six years prior.

The researchers behind the study were explicit in explaining that screen time and social media usage weren't the sole cause for these levels but were among its main contributing factors. [Statistics Canada also found](#) that youths aged 15 to 24 not only used social media more than older age groups, but also reported far higher negative outcomes from its use (Schimmele,2021). The researchers, which used the results of a 2018 survey of Canadians, found more younger users had reported experiencing “lost sleep, trouble concentrating on tasks or activities, less physical activity, feeling anxious or depressed, feeling envious of the lives of others, and feeling frustrated or angry” because of social media.

Yet some researchers — including Natasha Parent, a doctoral student at the University of British Columbia who specializes in the intersection of human development and technology — have refrained from pointing to social media use as being the determining factor in declining youth mental health. “I don't think that social media is that different from other things that we have seen in the past. You know, if this was 70 years ago, we'd be talking about TV, and there was so much fear mongering (back then) about how TV was going to melt kids' brains,” Parent said. Although Parent's own research and work with kids has found a similar connection between depression and social media, she's often found that those issues are driven by other

factors — a bad home life, relationship problems — and social media can act as a coping mechanism. Particularly during COVID-19, Parent says, “social media was actually a very important tool for teens and kids to connect with one another when they weren’t physically able to before.

“Teachers are aware that as social media’s reach grows, students are spending most of their social lives on these apps, making it harder to convince kids to tune out completely. While teachers say it’s still worth exploring ways to limit or outright ban phone use during classroom time, they say that would only address part of the problem that teachers are facing. “The amount of time spent fighting students to put their phones away, that’s a huge loss of time,” Jayne said. “We’re not able to focus on what we’re supposed to be doing because it’s up to us to police it.”

The fight for more mental health resources.

Dr. Philip McRae, a researcher with the Alberta Teachers’ Association, says what’s most concerning is that mental health resources have seen a decline for the students and teachers that need them — particularly during COVID-19. Among the issues, he says, are that there has been a general underfunding of resources from the provincial government that has led to a shortage of educational assistants and other support staff in schools. Even principals are being overworked, he added. “We do see a great deal of anger (toward) this current government around not having the adequate resourcing and supports in schools,” he said.

In 2020, [Alberta made deep cuts to its education system](#) totaling nearly \$1 billion and slashing thousands of support staff and educational assistants and redirecting it to the pandemic (Bennett,2020). While other provinces like [Quebec](#) and [Ontario](#) have also seen cuts to their education or local school board budgets, governments have also begun to redirect existing funding towards mental health supports. British Columbia allocated over \$20 million up until 2024, while Saskatchewan last month announced \$400,000 towards ensuring “mental health first aid” training for one staff member at every K-12 school (Rizza, 2018). “We wouldn’t expect to send our children to school without somebody knowing first aid for a physical issue, so we shouldn’t expect that support not to be in schools for mental health,” said Saskatchewan Education Minister Dustin Duncan.

Duncan says he’s aware not only of the rise in kids’ social media use but also the impact it’s had on the classroom and youth mental health. Stories he has heard from parents whose children have been bullied through social media led him to not only think about ways to limit kids’ use, but also his own. He says his 100-day break from social media helped spark the province’s Take a Break public awareness campaign, which was announced in December. “I talk to school boards on a regular basis, and there isn’t a meeting where the mental health of our students doesn’t come up, and the demands are becoming greater for more support for students,” he said. “This is a way to remind those students that, if it’s once a week or once a month, it’s okay to take a break from social media once in a while.” Paul Wozney, president of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU), says governments still aren’t going far enough. He says not only do teachers lack the resources necessary to tackle in-school crises and online bullying, but there is also a lack of legislation and guidelines for teachers and staff in general.

Woznalso, it isn't only students having to deal with the fallout from social media use, but also teachers now have added dimensions to their job — including a responsibility for them to teach kids proper online behavior. “Teachers’ workload is complicated by social media and the classroom because society expects teachers to be the primary educators of youth about appropriate online, virtual and social media behavior,” he said. “I think teachers feel very much like a lot of the other important figures in children’s lives aren’t taking the same kind of responsibility that is being laid on teachers.” Teachers say companies need to change. For Johnson, more mental health support will do little unless the social media companies themselves change their behaviors. “What we need is these big tech companies to actually care about our youth and their future and not their massive profits, right? Because honestly, they target kids,” she said. Facebook’s parent company Meta, which also owns Instagram, says its only incentive is to “try to give the maximum number of people as much of a positive experience as possible.” It also says it has spent more than \$5 billion on improving safety and security this year alone. The company also pushed back against the internal research highlighted by the Wall Street Journal.

While it admitted some teen Instagram users who struggled with anxiety and depression said the app made them feel worse, “more teens told us that Instagram made them feel better when experiencing these same issues. “Last month, Instagram launched its own Take a Break feature that gives notifications reminding users to put their phone down after a certain amount of time (Boynton,2021). The platform will also allow parents and guardians to set their own time limits for their kids, while exploring other options to “keep (kids) safe” (pp.13-15). Certain limits on video downloads and direct messaging for underage users, while push notifications are also paused during night hours for those users. The company, which has retained an outside



safeguarding firm to conduct a review of the platform's impacts on youth, also has a parental resource guide to foster family discussion. A spokesperson reinforced the company's position that "dangerous challenges and illegal behavior" — like the removal of soap dispensers that Johnson witnessed — "are not allowed on our platform. Snapchat CEO Evan Spiegel said the company is exploring an in-house parental control system called the "Family Center." The system will give parents "better insights to help protect their kids, in ways that don't compromise their privacy or data security," according to a company statement.

Parents, the UBC researcher, and other youth mental health experts say fostering parent-child relationships, while also encouraging more discussion in the classroom, is critical to improving teens' social media use. "So much of it is about the relationship" between parents and their kids, said Ashley Miller, a child psychiatrist at BC Children's Hospital. "Of course, all teenagers, as they get older, are going to have their private life because that's completely normal. But the stronger the underlying parent-child relationship is, the less likely they are to engage in the harmful behaviors online or to (feel they) need to hide serious things." Parents say teachers can play a role too by regularly adapting classroom policies on devices to fit the needs of their students.

"Maybe students will say at certain times of their lives, 'Oh, I really want to have my phone on because my grandma is in the hospital and I want to know something happens,' and then you can adjust the guideline," she said. "Make it a living document rather than a hard rule." Johnson agrees that social media is not an absolute evil — "Hey, I learned how to play the

ukulele on YouTube,” she laughs, “and a lot of our resources come from (social media)” — and she is always looking for new ways to integrate it into the classroom to keep students engaged. But she’s seen enough over the years to know that something needs to change. “The bottom line is our kids are hurting,” Johnson said. “They are hurting big time. When you have, you know, Grade 6s wanting to die, when you have kids who hate their lives and just feel worse and worse or lonelier because of this stuff ... This is extremely worrisome. “A lot of times people say, ‘Oh, the schools need to do more.’ We are, we are. We are. I can guarantee you that we are trying and trying, but this is not where it’s going to change. It must change at the top.” “A lot of times people say, ‘Oh, the schools need to do more.’ We are, we are. We are. I can guarantee you that we are trying and trying, but this is not where it’s going to change. It must change at the top” (NA, 2020, pp #4-7).

There is just so many schools and teachers can do to control the social media problem. Teachers are struggling to do their curriculum while trying to police the computers and phones, making sure everyone is still on task. Teachers have been shown that the government is not going to try to control what is on social media. Do we expect teachers to educate their students and be policing for inappropriate use of social media.

## Conclusion

As teachers, parents, and students, we are all having to balance social media and technology. For everyone it becomes a different challenge or success depending on the way it is looked upon.

Living in a world where a simple transaction at the store is dependent on the internet connection, we have become a cashless society.

Social media has overrun lives of the people who have become totally dependent on their phone or computer to tell them how day to day lives are going, wondering how people are going to comment on a post, wish a happy birthday or simply just hitting the like button. It has become sad that we cannot deal with being unplugged and living one day at a time.

Students can be on an emotional high or low and it can depend only how others perceive them on social media. Regulations need to be put in place for more control over bullying, stalking, and harassing on certain sites. Teachers and parents can moderate some of the content on their children or students' social media, but it can't all be controlled. The social media sites need to be engaged in the content that is being posted.

Depression and suicide are out of control, not just with adolescents but adults also. Trying to figure out the best solution is not easy; Pediatricians and physicians are prescribing more antidepressants and therapy than ever before. Parents are becoming more aware of mood swings and behavior changes. Get ahead of the problem and try to keep your children out of harm's way. Positive reinforcement at home is essential. A positive comment can go a long way in a child's mind. But everyone is looking for a positive comment, a smile or just a small gesture that shows someone cares.

Teachers are still having a difficult time competing with technology and social media. It is hard to come up with captivating ideas when students today have seen pretty much everything on social media. So, any ideas that other teachers have found successful need to be shared with other teachers who might be struggling with keeping their students' attention.

Technology has allowed teachers to be more creative and inventive with ideas that can keep students' attention and motivate them to success. So much negativity comes with children and technology/social media, but it is not all bad. Students can share ideas with one another, rewatch their lessons from the day in case they missed the day. Communication with their teachers and peers is so important.

The last is what parents can do to monitor their children on social media. Make sure you know their passwords and all the sites that they are on. Can parents know everything their children are doing online? The answer is no, they make up profiles and hide their identity so they are free to do whatever they want. It just becomes impossible to know everything a child is doing,

What is the answer in all we are facing? Be engaged if you are a teacher or parent, know what your child is doing and be aware of what others are doing also. There are positive and negative sides to social media and technology we must learn to make sure the good out ways the bad. Keeping an eye on how it is being used is a key to keeping a healthy minded child, but we also need to set an example for our children. If we as adults are constantly connected to social media, how can we possibly set a good example.

In conclusion, there must be a balance and moderation between society and social media. Now it needs to be a top priority on how to achieve that goal going forward. Is it up to the

government, parents, education officials, who has the control to make something positive happen and start focusing on what is great about having social media and technology.

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