



SCREEN SCHOOLED

TWO VETERAN TEACHERS EXPOSE HOW TECHNOLOGY OVERUSE IS
MAKING OUR KIDS DUMBER

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Tips for parents and educators

Question if the digital version is better than the “analog”.

- Question what you hear from anyone who makes tech use by kids sound too good to be true.
- Do the research. Look to unbiased and objective experts. Much of the “research” out there is being conducted by the companies selling it.
- Encourage children, especially young ones, to play in ways that cultivate imagination. A world of make-believe is way more cognitively enriching than predesigned worlds found in games, which are manifestations of others imagination. Less is more.

Consider the primary purpose of the tool or device.

- Get real. For a child, a screen is, at its core, a toy.
 - This is especially true for smartphones and tablets.
- Parents, stop texting kids when they are in school.
- When you allow your kids to have screen time, do it with your eyes wide open. Understand what they are doing and why they are doing it.
- Technology should work to enhance skills rather than replace them. Teach kids how to solve problems on their own before introducing technological aids.
- Teach kids to focus – truly focus – in ways that do not involve screens.
- Keep devices in common areas of the home, and forbid screens in kids’ bedrooms.
- Take kids’ devices away when you expect them to concentrate.
 - Schools should be “phone free zones”

Consider the goal of the lesson or activity.

- Ask:
 - Does requiring use of the technology significantly enhance the lesson?

- Am I ok with the course specific content being removed for technology specific instruction?
- Will understanding this technology help my students in the future?
- Does my activity incorporate any face-to-face interactions?
- If you think schools are adding technology “for technology’s sake,” voice your concerns. School systems generally pay far more attention to parents than any other group.

What is technology-use replacing?

- Provide opportunities for kids to be kids – without screens.
- Allow kids time to be bored. Mental downtime is when a lot of important cognitive processes happen.
 - Instill in kids the importance of knowledge.
 - Looking up something, and producing an answer is not the same as knowing it.
 - Have face-to-face conversations with your children – about anything and everything – but especially about this issue.
- Make them disconnect for a significant portion of each day. Make real-life connections a priority.
- Set sensible limits on screen time and stick to them.
- Parents, monitor your own screen time in the house and model appropriate screen-usage behavior.
- Replace screen time with physical/tactile activity time.
- Bring your children to school events and extracurricular activities.
- Be aware of the signs of technology addiction.
- Work with your school’s parent-teacher organization to raise the issue and at least begin this discussion in your community.
- Take it up a notch: organize, reach out to politicians, raise money, and support state and local candidates who promote sane screen use for kids.

Trust your gut.

Much of the research supporting increased technology use is funded by the companies selling it. If you feel like your children are getting too much screen-time, they are.