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CHNA15 - Social Media's Impact on Mental Health
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TECHNOLOGY AND LEARNING

Research reveals that using personal devices and technology for off-task activities, media multitasking, even the mere presence of a device, all have negative implications on a student's ability to learn new information, to recall information and to perform on quizzes and in class, in general (learn more at <https://www.turninglifeon.org/education>).

Encourage parents to **establish a Family Media Plan (learn more at <https://www.turninglifeon.org/family-media-plans>) and implement Tech-Free Times while doing homework.** Educators and other professionals who work with youth can create a similar technology plan for time spent together.

Studies show that implementing a "Technology Break," meaning a set time to check in with the connected world (generally 10-15 minutes), can relieve internal distractions. Students are less likely to be distracted by the uncertainty of when they can use their devices. **Encourage students to establish reasonable technology breaks but set a timer so students don't get sucked in.**

On a neurological level, some doctors and scientists believe that taking a physical/mental break from technology helps students process information in the hippocampus, the area of the brain responsible for analytical learning. Share this bit of information with them: **"Taking breaks from technology will help you complete your homework faster and perform better in school. More focused work = less time on homework = more time to do what you want!"**

Studies also found that students who wait a period of time to open and respond to alerts performed better on tests. This implies that students should be taught mindful use of technology. **Students should be reassured that they never need to respond immediately.**



As students use more technology to study, turn off notifications and remove apps and messenger from devices used for school. By removing these distractors, students are better able to focus. This works well for adults, too.

Students must be taught many different studying techniques and how to evaluate the effectiveness of each tool. For many students, the gaming component of some educational apps, like Quizlet, will counter its effectiveness as a learning tool as gaming can cause hyperarousal and anxiety. This hyperarousal interferes with a student's ability to learn. Students and teachers must have open dialogues about this, and students must be empowered to self-reflect and choose another study option when this happens.

Students should also be taught traditional forms of organization through the use of print assignment books. We know that the physical act of writing solidifies information into our memories, and recording assignments by hand forces students to evaluate the assignment presumably while the teacher is available to answer questions. Although some students prefer online tools, all students should be taught a variety of methods so they can actively decide what works better for them. Teachers should continue to teach this option alongside online tools.

As mentioned, the physical act of writing solidifies information into our memories.

Students should be taught how to take written notes, and the process of summarizing information and organizing it in a purposeful way for later studying. This is not done as effectively when typing notes or worse, accessing online teacher notes.

We also know that handwriting solidifies basic skills like capitalization, punctuation and spelling. These skills are often forgotten when computers and other devices do it for us.

Students need to develop these skills as habit and handwriting helps them do this.

There is value in the simple act of pondering. We do less of that now with the advent of Google. The brain is a muscle and exercising it makes it stronger. Students would do well to sit with their thoughts and to engage in discussions with classmates, teachers and parents. Students need to learn how to form their own opinions vs. adopting one they find online.