The Four Negative Sides of Technology *by Pamela DeLoatch May 2, 2015*

We live in a high tech world — with high tech classrooms. We embrace the benefits of using iPads during class, integrating tweets during presentations, and teaching students while using smart TVs. We know the many benefits of incorporating technology while teaching, such as adding diversity to lessons, increasing student interaction, and to bringing new perspectives and knowledge to the class.

5   But there can be a negative side resulting from inappropriate or overuse of technology, and that negative side can have serious and long-term consequences. To make the best out of tools of technology, teachers and parents must also recognize their downsides and how to avoid them.

Negative #1:

Using technology can change a child's brain. An article in Psychology Today says that the use of
10   technology can alter the actual wiring of the brain. More than a third of children under the age of two use mobile media. That number only increases as children age, with 95% of teens 12-17 spending time online. The time spent with technology doesn't just give kids newfangled ways of doing things, it changes the way their brains work. For example, the article says that while video games may condition the brain to pay attention to multiple stimuli, they can lead to distraction and decreased memory. Children who always
15   use search engines may become very good at finding information—but not very good at remembering it. In addition, the article said, children who use too much technology may not have enough opportunities to use their imagination or to read and think deeply about the material.

Negative #2:

Using technology can affect a child's ability to empathize. A study on two groups of sixth graders
20   found that kids who had no access to electronic devices for five days were better at picking up on emotions and nonverbal cues of photos of faces than the group that used their devices during that time. The increased face-to-face interaction that the test group had made students more sensitive to nuances in expression.

Overuse of technology can also affect a child's own mood. A report from the United Kingdom revealed
25   that kids who use computer games and their home Internet for more than four hours do not have the same sense of wellbeing as those who used that technology for less than an hour. One expert explained that with less physical contact, children might have difficulty developing social skills and emotional reactions.

Negative #3:

30   **Improper use of technology can expose a child to numerous risks.** Children who use technology may unwittingly share information that can put them in danger. In 82% of online sex crimes against children, the sex offenders used social networking sites to get information about the victim's preferences. And the anonymity of technology can also make it easier for people to bully others online. A quarter of teenagers say they have been bullied either by text or on the Internet. Sexting is another high-risk
35   behavior of concern, with 24% of teenagers aged 14 -17 have participated in some sort of nude sexting.

Negative #4:

Childhood obesity is on the rise, and technology may be to blame. Pediatricians also say that severe obesity is increasing among young people. Although one traditional focus is on the amount and type of foods kids eat, one study says that obesity is on the rise, not just because of food, but because as we
40 use more technology, we exercise less. With technology that includes cars, television, computers and mobile devices, the amount of time we spend sedentary increased and our time in physical activity dropped.

Addressing the Negatives of Technology

We're certainly not advocating cutting out all technology, but, *as with most things, moderation is best*.
45 Teachers and parents who want their students and children to experience the benefits of technology — without the negatives — should consider these ideas.

1. **Monitor the use of technology.** Whether you're a parent, teacher, or both, make sure you know how your kids are using technology. Many classroom computers have restrictions on which sites can be used. If yours doesn't, consider adding them or checking the search history to know what
50 your students are doing. For parents, some mobile phone plans offer family-friendly options that let parents restrict calls or texts during parent-established times.
2. **Teach responsible usage.** We don't suggest ignoring what technology can offer. Instead, talk with students about establishing their Internet footprint, and the long-range consequences of putting inappropriate information into cyberspace. Encourage students to discuss tricky
55 situations they may encounter online and help them work to a positive resolution.
3. **Be familiar with technology.** Keep up with what those young people are into. Vine, Snapchat, or whatever the current online trend is, stay current so you can recognize and head off any problems early on.
4. **Use classroom technology intentionally.** It's easy to allow technology (i.e. videos, movies) to
60 take precedence in a lesson. Be sure to use these tools to augment — not substitute for — your teaching.
5. **Offer alternatives to technology.** Give students an assignment that requires reading a hard copy of a material. Task them with interviewing each other — in person — instead of texting questions. Conduct class outside where you can sit and discuss a topic without the usual
65 distractions.

http://www.edudemic.com/the-4-negative-side-effects-of-technology/

<u>Tasks</u>:

Ia) Read the text and *find sub-headings* for each Negative #
Ib) *Sum up* the 'message' the text has for parents and educators.
II) *Analyze* the **marked phrase** in line 44 and *comment* briefly on its validity.
III) *Analyze* your own media behavior and *comment* on how you are exposed to the above mentioned risks.