

E-Safety or E-Healthy?

E-Safety is currently viewed solely as a behavioural concept, and has been classified by Byron (2008) as either an issue with content, contact and conduct. It clearly states that the technology itself is not an issue. Since 2008, there have been massive changes in technology and their use. Thus, children have access to technology almost all the time without considering the potential consequences. In the UK today children age 5-16 on average enjoy over 6 hours screen time a day, mostly made up of TV, playing games consoles, using a mobile/tablet or a computer. Within the age 5-10 group, it is around 4.5 hours average, which has almost doubled from 20 years ago (Connected Kids, 2015). Research indicates that young children require 2-3 hours per day of active rough and tumble play to achieve adequate sensory stimulation to their vestibular, proprioceptive and tactile systems. Currently, 79% boys and 84% girls aged 5-15 years in England are not meeting that current physical activity recommendation (HSC, 2013).

Technology is an issue, and the increase in technological use creates an imbalance (Rowan, 2013). This imbalance between the physical and the visual/sensory creates a wide range of problems (Chalkley et al, 2015) in children, teenagers and adults.

The presenter aims to discuss this increase, and the suggested issues that can occur as a result of this overuse of technology, such as isolation, emotional disconnections, avoidance of personal communication, sedentary behaviour, increased obesity, reduced attention spans, and even the reduction in creative writing capabilities (Gardner, Cited in Harvard Magazine.com, 2013). There are even links to the increase of disorders such as ADHD, autism, anxiety and depression (Kaiser Foundation, 2010). This could have serious implications as these children enter the HE system. Research suggests that this will create a “virtual future”, which is unsustainable (Rowan, 2012). This presentation will look at the impact this potentially virtual future could have on teaching in Higher Education. If children are not educated at a young age on the implications of technology overuse on their physical and mental well being, then the consequences may play on into their future as an adult learner.

As a result, the presenter will also discuss the rationale for a change in the approach to E-Safety education.

Health and Social Care Information Centre. Health Survey for England, 2012. Leeds, UK; 2013.

Chalkley A, Milton K, Foster C (2015) Change4Life Evidence Review: Rapid evidence review on the effect of physical activity participation among children aged 5 – 11 years. London: Public Health England

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