



## *Age of Captivation*

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A class enters the library to do some research for a project. Soon every internet page that opens is firstly redirected by the student to Facebook. Exasperated, the teacher proposes in a staff meeting that Facebook be banned from the school. Within a week, Facebook was no longer accessible on school computers. This is a common occurrence in secondary schools today, but what needs to be realized is that now days, technology is everywhere and used by everyone. Instead of ignoring the problem, schools should be teaching students how to effectively manage their time and avoid distractions from technology. The purpose of school is to teach students the skills to function in the outside world. With a society rapidly expanding in technological advances, the education system needs to think of technology as an ally and not as competition.

When offered the option of writing a research paper about the similarities between Othello and life today, or creating a movie demonstrating the same topic, most students choose the latter. By offering more choices and embracing the use of technology alongside education, more of each subject is being absorbed by the students without them even knowing it. For some students, getting hands-on experience is the best way that they can focus and absorb information and for some this involves using programs such as Moviemaker or PowerPoint. By including many options that cover all of the types of learning (kinetic, visual, auditory) teachers can insure that they will get the best work out of their students because the students will feel most comfortable presenting their work in a way where their creativity and understanding is highlighted. By getting students involved in their schoolwork in a way that interests them, the less inclined students will be to let their minds wander and get distracted by other technologies like texting and social networks.

The downfall of concentration however, may partially be due to technology, especially the internet and cell phones. Most people have computers and the internet which gives one instant access to a plethora of information. Because youth today have grown up with the internet, they expect to acquire information instantly which leads to decreased attention spans and patience levels. With cell phones, many people have internet access so no matter where they are, they have access to pages and pages of information and instant contact to their friends and family. One main distraction for teens is Facebook. This social network is an easy way for anyone to stay in contact with others, plan events, share photos and much more. To many teens, a social life takes precedence over studying, especially outside an educational setting. Some schools have the Facebook website banned which does help with focus during class because it eliminates one of many learning distractions. When students are not in school however, they don't have the school rules preventing them from accessing a site therefore if their willpower and interest is low, they will most likely succumb to a social page like Facebook instead of focusing on their schoolwork. Therefore the correct methods should be taken to ensure that students know how to manage their time and priorities. One such way is to create interest in school for the students. By using many different types of examples like short movie clips, PowerPoint, hands on experiments, diagrams, computers and much more, it can be assured that students will become engaged in learning which will increase focus and eliminate the urges of other distractions.

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Using familiar technologies to connect with teens will create better concentration and spike student interest in a subject. For example in a grade 12 biology class the teacher showed a short animation of DNA replication that she found on the internet. With epic music and cool graphics, every student's eyes immediately focused on the screen. Then while further explaining the topic through notes, it was clear that it was better understood and received by the students. In a math 11 class the teacher took the class to computers to investigate circles and angles using a special program. It was much easier for the students to understand the topic while playing around with the program, because they made mistakes and learned from them. Certain technology can impede the learning and engagement of a student, but when used in the right way, technology adds a different perspective to learning and increases the willingness to become involved in one's studies.

Relating learning with a teen's life can increase the chances of engaging the student. If teachers stay up-to-date with current events and teen interests, they can apply them to their lessons, which make them more relatable and interesting for a class full of teenagers. For example, in a grade 12 biology class, the teacher showed excerpts from the medical television show 'House' to relate the lesson to real life and to engage the students. Many students in the class regularly watch the show 'House' and to have it relate to their schoolwork and learn something from it was an unforgettable experience. By choosing this way to further explain a lesson, this biology teacher got every student in that classroom to remember what they learned in his class that day and also got them excited to return the next day.

With all of the technology that makes life easier, it is understandable that the current generation of teenagers is viewed as lazy. Trying to engage students in their studies is sometimes a difficult task as there are many distractions. Times have now changed to keep up with technology and teaching methods have somehow fallen behind. Trying to teach students with old methods isn't producing the desired results, but it doesn't have to be this way. It is time for teaching to move forward and work with the strengths and interests of the young generation and embrace technology as a partner in the teaching world. Teachers are in control of how students learn and by teaching methods to deal with distraction and by spiking interest in students through the use of movies, the internet, music, computers etc, this "age of distraction" can become an "age of captivation".

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