Lids Down, Heads Up:

Students Learn Strategies to Self-Monitor Focus While Immersed in 21st Century Technology

By: Alyssa Wilson

2009-2010 Mount Nittany Middle School Intern
Sixth Grade

alw5097@gmail.com

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Background Information
Description of the Teaching Context

As a Professional Development Intern through The Pennsylvania State University, I have worked in a sixth grade classroom at Mount Nittany Middle School (MNMS) in State College Area School District during the 2009-2010 school year. MNMS consists of 6th through 8th grade students, in which the 6th grade is in a hallway separated from the rest of the 7th and 8th grade students. This sixth grade class consists of twenty-four students, twelve female and twelve male. Of the twenty-four students, there is one African-American female, two African American males, one Indian female, one Asian female, and eighteen students who are identified as White or Caucasian. Based on a discussion with my mentor teacher, I became aware that the majority of the students in my class come from middle to upper class families, however, there are also a few who qualify for free and reduced lunches.

In considering academic levels, there are noticeable variations among this group of students. There are three students in the class that receive emotional support. In this class, one student receives Title 1 services in reading and writing while another student receives Title 1 support in writing only. Two students are identified as learning support. One student, identified as autistic, recently entered mainstream classes after being in an alternative program in 5th grade. This student receives extra support from the autistic support specialist and receives support from an individual paraprofessional for four periods a day. Additionally, there is one student in the class with Attention Deficit Disorder who has a behavior plan set to help him learn strategies to self monitor his behavior.

There has been an increasing issue with students not turning in their completed homework at all, turning their homework in late, or turning in low quality work. The students are
expected to place their homework in the designated homework bins each morning that the homework is due. My mentor and I then complete a checklist to see which students have not turned in their work. We then place the students’ names on the board under the category of the work so that the students are reminded of the assignments they need to complete and turn in. At the beginning of the year the board only had a few repetitive names, but recently the board has been filling to the point where we cannot use half of it for instructional use because the amount of late work is overwhelming.

On a regular basis, students are responsible for either completing the regular spelling or the challenge spelling every week. This is assigned on Monday and the students are required to turn the first sheet in on Wednesday and the second on Friday. Students are responsible for writing a weekly writing prompt, as well. Much of the writing for writing prompts takes place during class time unless a student has not used their time wisely and requires out of class time to complete it. Additionally, as reading is an essential element to the 6th grade curriculum, students are expected to read nightly from a book that meets the criteria for the genre of the month for all 6th grade students. Students are also expected to read nightly for their assigned book clubs. Students are given ample time in class to get started on their reading. There is occasional Social Studies or science homework. As the thematic unit, Passports to Understanding, has begun, students are writing travel logs to explain what they learned in class about once a week. Travel logs are expected to be at least five well developed sentences with an intro, supporting details, and a conclusion. The students have also been recently introduced to the geography lessons that are centered on learning the world through an Atlas. They are required to complete weekly Atlas packet worksheets.
We have also noticed continued struggles with getting students to stay on task during work time in class. When the students are given laptops to write an essay in class, many of the students change fonts and colors before attempting to write the prompt and before proofreading the essay. Although many of the students complete the assignments, we are noticing a lot of typos and errors alongside beautiful fonts and varieties of shadows, colors, and sizes in fonts. As my mentor and I walk around the room to assess how well the students are completing their writing prompt or research for an assignment, we often find the students playing online games or accessing irrelevant information. Even with much prompting to get back on task, the students are still engaged in these activities on the computer. (See Appendix A for full Inquiry Brief)

**Wonderings and Questions**

*Main Wondering*

My inquiry question focuses on understanding how the increasing use of 21st century technology, specifically computers and the Internet, affects student focus while completing homework and using computers during class work time.

“How can teaching self-monitoring strategies to 6th grade students affect their focus while immersed in a world of 21st century technology related distractions?”

*Sub-Wonderings*

- What are the benefits and drawbacks to training students to utilize strategies to promote focusing? Will this take away from the amount of work a student can complete or will it add to the quality of the work?
- Can students still learn effectively while multi-tasking? What impact does multi-tasking have on children’s brains and thinking? Are children really learning concepts when they
are multi-tasking?

- What is the relationship between a student who works in a place with little technology and a student who works in a place with technology?

- Is there a strategy that is most effective or should a student be exposed to a variety of strategies so that the student can implement the one that is most effective for their personality and learning style?

**Extended Question**

If students are taught strategies they can use while they are beginning to independently use all of the technology that is available to them, what effect will these strategies have on these students as they progress through their school, college, and/or a career? – While this is not a wondering that I can study this year, it is a question that is at the root of my wondering.

**Data Collection**

**Clear Description of Data Collection**

I collected data in a variety of ways in order to fully explore the effects, both negative and positive, of students’ focus and distraction with technology. Data collection was conducted before, during, and after the implementation of strategies for the students to utilize when completing assignments either using the computer or in the presence of technology.

**BEFORE**

Prior to implementing my inquiry, I designed and conducted a student survey. The survey questions focused on students’ access and use of technology and programs. It also addressed the students’ self-reflection of their distraction by technology. My intention in conducting this survey was to obtain information regarding students’ views on their level of distraction by technology, as well as, their feelings about multi-tasking. This interview allowed me to have a
better idea of which strategies would help the students to focus better. *(See Appendix B for Student Technology Survey)*

Before implementing the strategies, I designed and conducted a parent survey accompanied by a letter explaining the survey and overall inquiry. The survey questions focused on the students’ parent or guardians’ opinion and observation regarding their child’s use of technology when completing homework in the evenings. The intention for this interview was to note the similarities and differences between the parent and/or guardians views of their child’s distraction with technology in comparison to their child’s views of their own distraction. The intention was also to grasp an understanding of whether the parents and/or guardians felt that strategies would be beneficial to their individual child. Understanding the dynamic of technology allowance in students’ homes gave me a greater understanding of the students’ need for strategies. *(See Appendix C for Parent/Guardian Technology Survey)*

When planning to obtain baseline data, I was only going to administer student and parent/guardian surveys. However, after attending the annual technology training for teachers at Mount Nittany Middle School and Park Forest Middle School, I was introduced to the idea that the faculty as a whole has many experiences with technology over the years that led me to wonder about their professional opinion. Immediately following the training, I drafted a short faculty survey to gauge a better understanding of the faculties’ use of technology in the classroom, specifically computers, as well as their professional opinion regarding the students’ distraction and/or focus with technology. My prior goal for this survey was to find common themes amongst the faculty. I was eager to see how the faculty felt about teaching the students strategies to self-monitor their focus while immersed in technology. *(See Appendix D for Faculty Technology Survey)*
As I combined the results of the student surveys, I realized how many of the students felt that they were able to multi-task very well. This caused me to brainstorm ways that I could test the students’ ability to multi-task through a controlled simulation. I sat one-on-one with a student in a quiet room. The student was asked to look over two sets of playing cards in two different settings. In the first setting, the student was listening to his or her favorite song playing while in the other setting, it was fairly quiet. In all of the music playing settings, the students were asked to pick songs with lyrics in order to have the controlled setting similar amongst each student. The student was to use the same strategy during each simulation to try to remember as much about the set of eight cards as he or she could. After one minute, I put the cards away and asked the student to tell me what he or she could remember. I then took notes of what the student remembered. Questioning the student in regards to which setting was easier for him or her to perform this task allowed me to gauge a better understanding of his or her feelings about multi-tasking. I asked the student which time he or she was able to remember more. I also took anecdotal notes of their responses. My objective for this form of data collection was to gain evidence in terms of which students have the most difficulty concentrating when multi-tasking while immersed in technology. This simulation helped me answer the sub question of the effects of multi-tasking on students learning. I then analyzed the results to see if a common theme existed in regards to the effect the music had on the students’ observation of the cards, as well as, the connection between their self reflection in anecdotal note form and the actual results. (See Appendix E for Samples of the Controlled Simulation Responses and Anecdotal Notes)

Prior to implementing the strategies for students to focus better while using computers in the classroom, I wanted to take anecdotal notes of observations made in the classroom when students were using computers. Anytime that all students or a subset of students were using computers in the classroom, either in an instruction or work time setting, I walked around the room and noted any off task behavior. My intentions behind recording anecdotal notes in a systematic way was to gain a better understanding of the individual students who are off task during computer use time. I also wanted to see what type of off-task behavior students performed during class instruction or project work time. I then analyzed the students’ type of
off task behaviors in order to decide which strategies to implement as an intervention. (See Appendix F for Anecdotal Notes)

Directly before introducing the strategies, I interviewed a few students who I felt demonstrated a need to learn and utilize strategies. I interviewed individual children, except in one situation when I interviewed three children at once. The objective in conducting these interviews was to elicit more information from the students about what was actually going on behind the screens when the teacher is not looking at the screen. I wanted to review the recordings from the interview to determine the type of strategies that would be beneficial for the students to learn and utilize.

DURING

After introducing the interventions to the students through a class discussion, I implemented a tracking system. There are three components to this tracking system. One, the students are encouraged to fill out Strategy Use sheets whenever they complete homework or use the computer in class. These sheets allow the student to provide me with their name so that I can track individual progress, the date in order for me to analyze any patterns in the timing of the strategies, as well as the activity so that I am able to analyze the data to determine any patterns in regards to the times that the strategies are being used. The rest of this tracking sheet asks the student to mark whether or not he or she has used a strategy. The student is then asked to mark any of the strategies that he or she used. The student is able to mark down as many strategies as he or she chose to use. Due to the fact that there are different times throughout the day that a different subset of students will use the computer and during the evenings a different variety of students will attempt to utilize the strategies for different reasons, I just encouraged the students to fill out the sheets whenever they felt best fit. During class time when I would see a student
using the computers, I would sit a sheet on his or her desk indicating that I would like for him or her to complete one of the sheets. *(See Appendix G for Tracking Sheets)*

After the students submit their tracking sheet to me for an individual assignment, they are to track their personal use of strategies on a self-monitoring tracking sheet. This tracking sheet asks the student to include the date and the number strategy that they used. The students stapled the sheet to their assignment notebooks so that when they open their assignment notebooks, they can reflect upon which strategies they have tried and which strategies work best for them individually. The goal for this tracking sheet was for the students to begin to reflect upon their own distraction. This tracking sheet will allow the children to not only remember to try out the strategies, but encourages them to look for the strategy that works best for them. *(See Appendix H for Self-Monitoring Tracking)*

While the students are tracking their own progress on the Self-Monitoring Tracking sheets, I will be using a Class Intervention Tracking sheet in order to analyze the class’ progress collectively. The purpose for keeping track of the students’ progress on a class data set is to help me lay out all of the students’ names with the activities they performed and the strategies used or not used. This allowed me to combine the data into one area that could be analyzed. I also used this data to discuss with the students the strategies that are or are not working for them. I wanted to see if certain strategies work for individual students or if there is a strategy that works bests for most of the students. Laying out all of the data allowed me to accomplish this. *(See Appendix I for Class Intervention Tracking Sheet)*

While the students were engaged in tracking their own self-monitoring strategies, I became curious to see how our school librarian felt about this topic. I chose to interview the librarian for two main reasons. One, our school librarian utilizes many aspects of technology to not only teach, but to manage the activities in the library. Secondly, her position in the library
lends her to become familiar with the different grade levels in the school. The purpose to this interview was to discover aspects of technology that she finds to be beneficial and changes that she has seen in classroom management because of technology. I was also interested to see how she felt the strategies might work in the classroom. (See Appendix J for Interview with librarian)

AFTER

Nearing the end of the inquiry, for now, I decided to use a different assessment in order to receive more information from the students. I wanted to utilize an aspect of our classroom’s weekly schedule to obtain information regarding each individual child’s feelings about the strategies. Each week our students draft a weekly writing prompt. These are usually three paragraph essays with a lot of detail; however, we did not want to give such cumbersome work during the week of the standardized testing, so I decided to have the students’ weekly writing prompt be a one paragraph essay describing which strategy worked best for him or her as an individual and why. I wanted to obtain individual responses so that I could take a closer look at whether the strategies worked best for certain students over others. I was curious to see whether there were strategies that worked better with males than females or with learning support children than learning enrichment children. I also felt that for middle school students, it would be valuable to read the reasoning behind each of the students’ opinions rather than just having them compete the post-intervention survey only. This essay gave me much more insight into the students’ thinking. (See Appendix K for Students Weekly Writing Prompts)

In order to assess the students’ self-awareness of technology distraction and the progress that they have made with the strategies, I conducted a post intervention student survey. I drafted this survey in order to compare the students’ initial feelings on how technology distracts them to
how they feel about it after having the chance to monitor their focus and work habits. I also wanted to see the differentiation in the strategies that worked best for individual students. (See Appendix L for Post Intervention Survey)

Data Analysis

Steps Taken to Analyze the Data

When collecting the data for this inquiry, I carefully planned and collected data that would help me answer my main wondering and sub-questions. I was most specifically curious in determining how students can refocus after being distracted by technology. As I began to analyze the data, I was interested in discovering whether the strategies made an impact on how students felt about their ability to focus while using technology. I was eager to discover which of the strategies was the most effective and why.

The first step that I took to analyze student data was to combine all of the survey responses from the faculty, students, and parents/guardians. Once I combined their open-ended responses, I was able to read and re-read through them to search for patterns or common themes amongst the three different subsets of people. While I could not combine the writing prompts until nearing the end of the study, I was able to make one document that contained all of the writing prompts. I once again sat down and read and re-read the writing prompts from the students searching for common themes amongst the students’ opinions about the strategies.

In addition to looking at the open-ended responses, I also found it important to spend time combining the data from all of the surveys. Once I combined the data, I had concrete numbers and percentages to work with that gave me a better idea of how each subset of people felt about distraction of technology.
After I completed the last survey with the students, I realized that comparing the individual students’ initial surveys with their post intervention survey would allow me to see how many students’ views of technology changed after learning strategies. Therefore, I read through all of the students’ surveys and compared those results with the students’ latest opinion of their distraction.

Additionally, after using surveys and classroom observations to analyze the students’ distraction, I looked back at the student interviews. I did this so that I could make claims about the students’ change in opinion regarding their focus or distraction with technology.

**Explanation of Findings**

After analyzing my data through the methods outlined above, I found patterns and trends within my data that allowed me to make three strong claims regarding the distraction that 21st century technology lends to the classroom and how the strategies impacted the students’ focus.

Originally, I thought that I was going to look to see how the strategies affect students’ completion of homework, but once I began the study, I was more interested in determining the strategies effect on the students’ focus, as well as, the self-awareness that students produced through this inquiry. I also became interested in how the use of computers affected classroom management.

**Claims**

Claim #1: When students are presented with strategies to control their focus while immersed in technology, individual students choose the strategy that is most effective for his or her personal needs.
While teaching self-monitoring strategies to my students was at the core of this inquiry, I was expecting to see one or two strategies that the majority of students used; however, the data explained otherwise. I used a class meeting time to introduce each of these strategies to the class by using examples and modeling the strategies. The class meeting gave me the chance to not only introduce the strategies, but also to answer the students’ questions. I numbered the strategies to simplify the tracking system by eliminating words. Students could either use 1) use a reminder post-it note, 2) set a goal for yourself, 3) set a reward to yourself, 4) use the “three finger” rule, or 5) turn off other technological devices/programs. While analyzing the students’ tracking sheets, I was able to discover that the class as a whole used a variety of strategies. There were a total of five strategies that I decided to teach the students. For example, while the students were researching for their websites about Mexico in Social Studies, a few students used strategy number 4 while other students used strategy 1, 2, and 5. Therefore, a few students embraced using the “three finger” rule while other students used the post-it notes, set a goal for themselves, or turned off other technological devices/programs.

Additionally, through a student survey after the intervention, I was able to identify students’ preferred strategies. There was a varied interest in the strategies that the students found to be the most effective. Three students preferred to use the post-it note, five choose to set a technology goal for themselves, three set a reward for themselves, four used the finger rule, and seven used the strategy of turning off technological devices and programs. While there were a higher number of students who turned off technological devices, there was still a fairly even distribution of preferred strategies.

While reading through the writing prompts, I was able to identify the rationale behind each of the individual students’ strategy choices. Through analyzing the data, I noticed that
many of the students chose a strategy that was meaningful to their personality. For example, one student explained in her writing prompt that turning off technological devices works best for her because she is easily distracted by messages from friends popping up on her screen, hence why this particular strategy worked best for her. While another student chose a different strategy, the post-it note reminder, because he discovered that he often finds himself wandering off of the sites that he should be on. With his personal distraction patterns, he discovered that using a reminder best meets his needs. Through the study, it was interesting to see students becoming aware of strategies that are most effective for them.

Claim #2: When students are presented with self-monitoring strategies, the students become more self aware of their distraction.

When presenting the students with initial surveys and interviews to grasp an understanding of their feelings regarding technology distraction, I found that the students’ awareness of their distraction with technology did not correlate with the observations I was making while tracking the students’ off task behaviors using laptops. For example, some students claimed that they were never distracted by technology, but those same students were seen emailing when they should have been working on a writing assignment or using Google to search for topics of interest to them. When taking a closer look at the anecdotal notes about individual students while they were using computers in the classroom, I observed that the students who were off task with the computers were generally the same four students repeatedly.

Looking at the students in particular who were off task the most, they have become more self aware of their distraction, as I have introduced these strategies. In the initial surveys, all of these students claimed that technology did not distract them through the varied questions. When asked specific questions regarding aspects of technology distraction that I observed them
individually doing in the classroom, they replied with a negative response in that they did not believe that they were off task. However, after introducing the strategies and having class conversations about the need to be self aware of becoming distracted by technology, three out of four of the same students replied on their post intervention survey that they are distracted by technology; therefore, providing these teaching strategies makes the students become more self aware of their ability to focus while immersed in a world of 21st century technology. In the initial surveys, the students felt that they never were distracted, but after having the students engaged in conversation regarding their personal distractions with technology, the majority of the students admitted the distraction as being a problem for them.

I decided to interview one student in particular because of the amount of times this student’s name appeared on my list for not staying on task when using the computers. In this interview, he began to express to me the type of off task behaviors that he conducts during class time with computers. These types of behaviors are all behaviors that he did not admit on his initial survey. This shows that once a student has been introduced to the idea of being distracted by technology, the student will become more self-aware; therefore, lending to a solution to the issue, which is the use of strategies. It would not be possible to self-monitor without self-awareness. I could not expect the students to utilize these strategies without being aware that they are distracted.

In addition to the students whom I observed having the most challenges with becoming distracted in the classroom, comparing all individual surveys pre and post intervention, I found that eleven students who did not feel that technology distracted them, now feel that technology distracts them. Not all of the strategies were effective for these students, but they were able to find awareness in their ability to focus and what distracts their focus.
Claim #3: When incorporating laptops into the classroom, teachers must approach classroom management with awareness of distraction.

Although I was looking to see how self-monitoring strategies affected students’ focus when using computers, I also discovered aspects of classroom management that are affected by the implementation of computers into the classroom. Reading through all of the faculty survey responses, the majority of the faculty feels that they need to constantly address the students’ lack of attention when computers are on their desks. While I have found the strategies to be useful for individual students, I also discovered that incorporating laptops into the classroom immensely impacts classroom management. Discussion with the school librarian brought me to two ways to address this issue. One, like any effective classroom management, the lessons should be engaging so that the students are not wanting to get off task because the lesson or activity is simulating. The lesson needs to be created with a meaningful purpose for the use of the laptops. During a seminar with the school principal, we learned that the best type of classroom management is to engage the students so that there will be little need for classroom management. My mentor observed our class completing an interactive science lesson where they were able to see how sounds work. They were also expected to complete a worksheet that follows the interactive website. While observing the students, there was not one student who was off task because the engagement level of the lesson was increasingly stimulating.

Additionally, while the lessons should be engaging, they must also be structured with meaningful purpose of where the teacher should position oneself to monitor student behavior. If the teacher is standing behind a computer giving instructions while other students have their laptops in front of them, the teacher is not physically in a position to be able to see what the students are doing on their computers. Allowing the student to model or demonstrate how to use
a program with the teacher prompting allows the teacher to walk around the room and monitor
students’ computers. However, if the independent self-monitoring strategies have been
introduced and encouraged and the lesson is engaging enough, the teacher should not have to
worry about the classroom management aspect of using the laptops. Setting expectations and
teaching strategies should serve as a preventative method for classroom management when
incorporating technology into the classroom-learning environment.

Through the faculty surveys, I discovered that most of the faculty at Mount Nittany
Middle School felt that setting computer use expectations at the beginning of the school year and
reinforcing throughout the year is essential to proper use. The majority of the teachers feel that
teaching self-monitoring strategies would be just as effective as teaching manners and other
forms of strategies such as comprehension strategies or relaxation strategies. Overall, it was
determined that these strategies are life skills that are compatible with other life skill strategies.

**Reflections and Implications for Future Practice**

In completing this inquiry, I discovered that some students find benefits in using
strategies to help them refocus while immersed in technology, as well as, engage in self
awareness of their focus when learning about the strategies. I also discovered that the classroom
management dynamic takes on a different face when laptops are introduced to the curriculum
and classroom learning experience. I am excited that I was able to uncover strategies that my
students reflected on as being beneficial to them. As I reflected on this inquiry, I am most
anxious to see, in the future, if the students in my class utilize these strategies throughout their
education to help them refocus, especially as they increase their independent work time and use
of technology.
As I reflect upon this experience, I found that my students warmed up to this concept of monitoring their focus and/or distraction once I began to teach the students the concepts. During the initial surveys, the students were disengaged, but by the time they were asked to reflect upon their use of strategies in the writing prompt, they were much more eager to share their thoughts. I was not anticipating how much more aware the students would become after learning the strategies and engaging in conversations about staying focused with technology.

What I have gained from this inquiry can be summed up into two areas. One, I have learned the importance of treating these strategies as a part of the setting expectations portion of the classroom. Through all of the data, I realized how vital it is to include helping students learn to become aware of themselves and how they focus. I wasn’t sure how aware the students would be, but the majority of the students experimented with all of the strategies and reflected upon the most effective ones. This self-awareness and meta-cognition was not an aspect I was looking for, but an important portion to being able to teach the students to use these strategies effectively.

Although I will not be able to see how well the students utilize these strategies or whether or not they have self-awareness in the future, this is an aspect of the inquiry that I wish I could research long term. I wish that I could see the long-range impact, but I will be able to see how well I have grown in my personal self-awareness and use of strategies and use that knowledge to help model effective strategies to my future students.
Appendix A

Inquiry Brief

Inquiry Context

As a Professional Development Intern through The Pennsylvania State University, I have worked in a sixth grade classroom at Mount Nittany Middle School (MNMS) in State College Area School District during the 2009-2010 school year. MNMS consists of 6th through 8th grade students, in which the 6th grade is in a hallway separated from the rest of the 7th and 8th grade students. This sixth grade class consists of twenty-four students, twelve female and twelve male. Of the twenty-four students, there is one African-American female, two African American males, one Indian female, one Asian female, and eighteen students who are identified as White or Caucasian. Based on a discussion with my mentor teacher, I became aware that the majority of the students in my class come from middle to upper class families, however, there are also a few whose families are of a lower socio-economic status.

In considering academic levels, there are noticeable variations among this group of students. There are three students in the class that receive emotional support. In this class, one student receives Title 1 services in reading and writing while another student receives Title 1 support in writing only. Two students are identified as learning support. One student, identified as autistic, recently entered mainstream classes after being in an alternative program in 5th grade. This student receives extra support from the autistic support specialist and receives support from an individual paraprofessional for four periods a day. Additionally, there is one student in the class with Attention Deficit Disorder who has a behavior plan set to help him learn strategies to self monitor his behavior.

There has been an increasing issue with students not turning in their completed homework at all, turning their homework in late, or turning in low quality work. The students are expected to place their homework in the designated homework bins each morning that the homework is due. My mentor and I then complete a checklist to see which students have not turned in their work. We then place the students’ names on the board under the category of the work so that the students are reminded of the assignments they need to complete and turn in. At
the beginning of the year the board only had a few repetitive names, but recently the board has been filling to the point where we cannot use half of it for instructional use because the amount of late work is overwhelming.

On a regular basis, students are responsible for either completing the regular spelling or the challenge spelling every week. This is assigned on Monday and the students are required to turn the first sheet in on Wednesday and the second on Friday. Students are responsible for writing a weekly writing prompt, as well. Much of the writing for writing prompts takes place during class time unless a student has not used their time wisely and requires out of class time to complete it. Additionally, as reading is an essential element to the 6th grade curriculum, students are expected to read nightly from a book that meets the criteria for the genre of the month for all 6th grade students. Students are also expected to read nightly for their assigned book clubs. Students are given ample time in class to get started on their reading. There is occasional Social Studies or science homework. As the thematic unit, Passports to Understanding, has begun, students are writing travel logs to explain what they learned in class about once a week. Travel logs are expected to be at least five well developed sentences with an intro, supporting details, and a conclusion. The students have also been recently introduced to the geography lessons that are centered on learning the world through an Atlas. They are required to complete weekly Atlas packet worksheets.

We have also noticed continued struggles with getting students to stay on task during work time in class. When the students are given laptops to write an essay in class, many of the students change fonts and colors before attempting to write the prompt and before proofreading the essay. Although many of the students complete the assignments, we are noticing a lot of typos and errors alongside beautiful fonts and varieties of shadows, colors, and sizes in fonts. As my mentor and I walk around the room to assess how well the students are completing their writing prompt or research for an assignment, we often find the students playing online games or accessing irrelevant information. Even with much prompting to get back on task, the students are still engaged in these activities on the computer.
Rationale

A Penn State student from the College of Communications visited our classroom to survey our students in regards to the effects of cell phone use on grammar skills. I started to spin my wheels about technology and the effects that 21st century technology has on students and their academic performance, especially their homework. I started to analyze my own study and work habits and realized that growing up in the 21st century world of technology has greatly affected my personal academic performance.

From there, I informally had conversations with some friends at the collegiate level to see how they felt technology has distracted them from their work. I also reflected on my own experience with technology distraction. After hearing numerous professors, teachers, college students, and 6th graders tell me that technology has become a major distraction for them, I knew that I wanted to discover strategies that would help students deal with this challenge of focusing with so many distractions and the generation of extreme multi-taskers. I keep coming back to a wondering that I won’t be able to study in a year; a wondering that would require a continued study of a few students for many years. I keep pondering over whether teaching students to use strategies while still at the elementary age will affect their study habits, as they get older. For example, will a student who learned strategies to cope with distractive technologies focus better in college classes with a laptop on his or her desk than a student who did not learn strategies to cope with this distractibility? As research has shown that many college students struggle with this issue, I wonder what strategies could be taught to 6th graders and how they could affect their future education and learning capabilities. Based on discussions with my students, many of them currently get back on track with their work because their parents tell them to, not because they have strategies to get themselves back to work. I keep wondering what is going to happen when these students go to college or into a career and they haven’t developed self-monitoring strategies.

Recently, my mentor and I have noticed a major increase with the students not submitting completed assignments by the due date. Collecting homework from the students has transformed from a morning routine to a daily task of asking students where all their work is. Additionally, the quality of the work is not to the standard that my mentor and I believe the majority of the students’ work should be. I then started to wonder if technology is distracting some of the
students. Through informal interviews with my students, as well as, a survey that I gave the class, I was able to assess that many of the students find technology to be a strong distraction to them in one way or another. These technologies consist of video game, computers, Internet, cell phones, and iPods. Based on the results from the anonymous survey, I am also wondering if students find multi-tasking to be an effective strategy to study and complete work? If so, is their belief in whether they are learning while multi-tasking an accurate correlation to what they are actually learning? I started to wonder what I could do to help students learn and maintain strategies that promote self-monitoring while working. “If the students are plugged in, does the content sink in?” When I read this title to one of the online sources that I researched, it really brought me to wonder the same question. If students and society as a whole are constantly plugged in to so many technological devices, are we actually capable of properly focusing or are we setting ourselves up to never fully grasp the content?

I want to determine what teachers and potentially parents can do to help 6th graders learn strategies to help them focus so that they don’t fall into some of the distraction slumps that I see college students falling into. If we train students to learn these strategies now, will it help them when they don’t have parents to stop them from getting off task? Although I cannot monitor this question now, it would be incredibly interesting to follow a few student through their school years and into college or a career to see if the strategies are effective. I am wondering how we can help them now before it is too engrained in their daily routine. I am wondering how important parental support is in successfully integrating these strategies into the students’ every day lives?

**Main Wondering**

“How can teaching self-monitoring strategies to 6th grade students affect their focus while immersed in a world of 21st century technology distractions?”

**Sub Questions**

What are the benefits and drawbacks to training students to utilize strategies to promote focusing? Will this take away from the amount of work a student can complete or will it add to
the quality of the work?

Can students still learn effectively while multi-tasking? What impact does multi-tasking have on children’s brains and thinking? Are children really learning concepts when they are multi-tasking?

What is the relationship between a student who works in a place with little technology and a student who works in a place with technology?

Is there a strategy that is most effective or should a student be exposed to a variety of strategies so that the student can implement the one that is most effective for their personality and learning style?

**Extended Question**

If students are taught strategies they can use while they are beginning to independently use all of the technology that is available to them, what effect will these strategies have on these students as they progress through their school, college, and/or a career? – While this is not a wondering that I can study this year, it is a question that is at the root of my wondering.

**Time Line**

**Week 1** (February 1-5)

- Finalize wondering
- Compose sub-questions
- Brainstorm data collection for each sub-question
- Write Inquiry Brief
- Write Annotated Bibliography
- Collect Student Technology/Homework Tracking Sheets
- Track student late work

**Week 2** (February 8-12)
• Edit Inquiry Brief
• Submit Inquiry Brief
• Edit Annotated Bibliography
• Submit Annotated Bibliography
• Track student late work
• Create homework tracking sheet
• Create observation checklist (for when students use computers during class)
• Give observation checklist to my mentor; ask if she would record any instances of when students are formatting their essays and not writing or proofreading either while I am working with the students or when I am out of the classroom.

Week 3 (February 15-19)

• Implement observation checklist in the classroom
• Take anecdotal notes of distractions as a way to further explain the observation checklist of classroom distractions
• Create another survey for the students as an extension of the initial survey (baseline data that will include names for tracking purposes only)
• Create a parent survey (baseline data that will include names for tracking purposes only)
• Create letter to go with the parent survey
• Track student late work
• Develop a plan for the individual student simulations (testing distraction of the students using playing cards and music *see collecting data for thorough explanation)

Week 4 (February 22-26)

• Get permission from principal to use the parent survey/letter
• Get suggestions/permission from PDA and mentor for parent survey/letter
• Have the students complete the initial survey questions (with names)
• Create interview questions
• Have mentor and PDA look over interview questions (baseline data)
• Create discussion questions for the class discussion
• Have a class meeting to ask for strategies the students believe they could use to help them and to talk about the issues they have with technology distraction.
• Track student late work

Week 5 (March 1-5)

• Conduct interviews with individual students (about 5 students)
• Track student late work
• Send parent survey home/letter in Monday folder (due Thursday March 4th)
• Create a lesson plan to teach the interventions
• Create an assessment to gauge what the students understand about the interventions
• Create a letter to send home letter to promote interventions
• Get permission from principal/mentor to send home to parents
• Track student late work

Week 6 (March 8-12 Spring Break)

• Organize the student survey data into graphs or charts
• Organize the parent survey data into graphs or charts
• Organize the tracking sheets for in class observation of technology distraction

Week 7 (March 15-19)

• Have a class meeting to teach the interventions
• Track student late work
• Have a class meeting at the end of the week to follow up on the first week of interventions

Week 8 (March 22-26)

• Create interview questions to track interventions/ideas for new strategies (this interview will be conducted after the students have been using the strategies)
• Create student survey to track interventions
• Create parent survey to track interventions
• Get permission to send home parent survey
• Track student late work

Week 9 (March 29-April 2)

• Have student complete the survey
• Interview individual students (the students who were interviewed in the original interview for the baseline data)
• Send home parent survey in Monday Folder
• Analyze Data
• Begin writing inquiry paper
• Track student late work

Week 10 (April 5-9)

• Analyze data and look for patterns or common themes in the data
• Continue writing inquiry paper
• Prepare for Inquiry Conference

Week 11 (April 12-16)

• Edit Inquiry Paper
• Submit Inquiry paper rough draft
• Prepare for Inquiry Conference
Week 12 (April 19-23)

- Prepare for Inquiry Conference

Week 13 (April 26-30)

- Complete any extraneous requirements
- Prepare for Inquiry Conference

Week 14 (May 3-7)

- Inquiry Final Paper Due

May 8th - Inquiry Conference

Collecting Data

Surveys

In order to collect and formulate statistics from my class, I will be surveying the students and combining the students’ individual responses into a class set of data. This class set of data will allow me to review the class as a whole to search for common themes or certain patterns. It will also provide me with tangible numbers to look at to get a visual representation of the affect technology has on children. I have already collected one survey from my students as an initial survey to serve as baseline data, as well as, to gauge if distractive technology is a problem for my students. After tallying the results, my mind started to wonder to more questions that I would like to ask the students. I plan on having the students complete more surveys. There will be one more survey for the students before the intervention and a survey after the intervention. In order to track the students’ progress alongside tracking their late work, I will have the students include their names on the surveys. No one other than my mentor, PDA, and myself will see the students’ names. I am planning on tracking students who find technology to be a major distraction for them. I will receive that information through the surveys.

Due to this intervention being predominantly home based, I am going to survey the parents, as well. I am going to send home a survey pre-intervention and post-intervention. I will include a small letter to the parents so that they understand the purpose for the survey.

Tracking/Observations
I am going to begin to track the names of students whose homework is not turned in on time in order to compare it with the students who spend a lot of time using technology. I will compare this with the self-tracking sheet that I gave to the students asking them to track how often they use specific technology and complete homework. This will allow me to analyze whether the students who admit to being distracted by technology are having more success with turning in work after the intervention has been introduced or if no change is observed.

I am going to be observing and tracking the students as they work in the classroom on computers. Without telling the students that I am observing, I will be using a checklist with space for anecdotal notes to track the students who format their fonts, colors, etc before proofreading and/or writing. I will also be tracking students who are engaged in other online or computer activities that they are not permitted to be doing at that current time. For example, if I see a student on Google image or picture booth when they should be writing an essay, I will track that information on the checklist.

**Interviews**

I am going to interview individual students to find out more about their individual study habits and activities in which they participate in during the evening. For example, a student may have trouble completing homework in the evenings because he spends three hours at theatre. I am going to interview the students who indicate being distracted as well as students who are not admitting to being distracted; therefore, allowing me to see how those students stay focused. Interviews will allow me to have more open-ended responses and get to the root of the problem. Interviews, both pre and post intervention, will allow me to have one on one conversations with the students to see if they have made progress using the interventions. Because I cannot assess how they feel about it, I can ask them and see if they have learned.

**Video Taping Class Discussions**

Knowing my class and how much they enjoy having conversations as a class, I plan on having class discussions I will tape so I can listen to the students share information with the class. I want to listen to their responses when they informally feed off of each other. I plan on conducting a few class discussions; at least one pre-intervention, one during the intervention, and one post-intervention.

**Simulation**
After researching ways to analyze students’ multi-tasking abilities and how well they are able to focus and obtain information, I decided to create a simulation activity to help gain a better understanding for this inquiry. I also want it to serve as a way to show the students how multi-tasking is affecting their learning, even if they believe it has no effect on them. This will also help me gain evidence in terms of which students have the most difficulty concentrating when multi-tasking with technology. I will sit one student down at a time in a quiet room. The student will be asked to look over two sets of cards in two different settings. In the first setting, the student will have a favorite song with lyrics playing while in the other setting it will be silent. The student will tell me what they remember from the two sets of cards immediately following each set of cards. I will analyze the results to see if a common theme exists in regards to the effect the music has on the students’ observation of the cards.

Anecdotal Notes

As I will be completing a checklist of students distracted by technology in the classroom computer time, I will further assess their distraction by taking anecdotal notes on the off task technology related activity they are performing. This will allow me to understand which students struggle with getting distracted by specific online or computer programs. I will also be recording when these instances are occurring so that I can use that information when developing the strategies to teach to the class.

Appendix B

Student Technology Survey Results

Name: ____________________________

Please circle the answer that best represents your use of technology.

1. **Do you have your own cell phone?** Yes - 15 or No - 7

   *If you answered yes to the first question, please answer the following questions.*

   *If you answered no, please skip to number 11.*

2. **Do you keep your cell phone near you when you work on homework?** Yes - 12 or No - 3
3. Do you turn your cell phone off when you are doing homework? Yes – 2 or No- 13

4. Do you change the volume of your cell phone to silent or vibrate when you are doing homework? Yes – 5 or No – 9 or Sometimes - 1

5. Does your cell phone ring with calls and texts while you are working on homework? Yes - 9 or No – 5 or Sometimes - 1

6. Does communicating using your cell phone stop you from doing your work for a small amount of time? (For example, you are working on your writing prompt and the phone rings, do you stop doing your work to talk on the phone?) Yes – 6 or No – 8 or Sometimes - 1

7. Do you text message while you are working on homework? Yes - 8 or No – 6 or Sometimes - 1

8. Do you have text message conversations while you are working on homework? (text message conversation refers to numerous text messages back and forth between you and another person) Yes - 6 or No – 7 or Sometimes - 2

9. If yes to the previous question, are the text messages or phone calls generally related to homework or schoolwork? Yes - 2 or No – 8 or Didn’t Answer - 1

10. Do you feel that your cell phone sometimes distracts you from completing your work in a timely manner? Yes – 5 or No – 10 or Didn’t Answer - 7

11. Do you have a computer at your house? Yes - 22 or No - 0

12. When you are on the computer completing homework at home (including research for class), do you find yourself leaving the work to search the web for sites unrelated to your homework? Yes - 8 or No – 12 or Sometimes - 2
13. If yes to the above question, what websites are you visiting? (For example: sports, online games, chat rooms, facebook, myspace, celebrity sites, etc)

14. When you are on the computer completing homework (including research), do you find yourself leaving the work to get on social networking sites (facebook, myspace, twitter)? Yes - 8 or No - 14

15. If yes to the previous question, what social networking site are you going to?

16. When you are on the computer completing homework (including research), do you find yourself leaving the work to play online games? Yes - 6 or No – 15 – Sometimes - 1

17. If yes to the previous question, what games are you playing?

18. When you are on the computer completing homework (including research), do you find yourself leaving the work to chat with friends on iChat, facebook chat, AIM, or Skype? Yes - 10 or No – 11 or Sometimes - 1

19. Do you find yourself choosing your font and/or colors before beginning to type your assignments at home? Yes – 8 or No – 9 or Sometimes – 4 or Didn’t Answer - 1

20. Do you find yourself changing fonts and colors before proofreading or editing your writing assignments at home? Yes - 12 or No - 10

21. When you are using a laptop in the classroom, do you find yourself getting on websites when you were not told to do so? (For example, you should be writing your “I Have A Dream” speech and you start to play a game or check your email?) Yes - 3 or No – 17 or Sometimes - 2
22. When you are searching for images online for class projects while in school on the laptops, do you find yourself spending too much time searching for images? Yes - 8 or No – 15

23. Do you feel that you are wasting time by searching too much? Yes - 6 or No – 16

24. Do you think you spend too much time searching for images online? Yes - 5 or No - 17

25. Do you find yourself changing fonts and colors before proofreading or editing your writing assignments at school? Yes – 9 or No - 13

26. Do you find yourself changing the fonts and colors of an assignment before even beginning the assignment at school? Yes – 7 or No – 11 or Sometimes – 2 or Didn’t Answer - 2

27. Do you find yourself adding graphics and backgrounds to assignments without direction from the teacher to do so? Yes – 3 or No – 18 or Sometimes - 1

28. Do you find yourself rushing to complete homework in the evenings because you have been engaged in technology activities for too long (for example, you wanted to get your work done between 4pm and 6pm, but you ended up playing video games from 5pm to 6pm so now it is 6pm and the work is not completed? Yes – 3 or No - 19

29. Do you think that you have trouble completing your homework in the evenings because you are distracted by technology? Yes - 4 or No – 16 or Sometimes - 2

30. Do you think that you have trouble concentrating on your work because your mind wonders to other technology activities that you could be doing? Yes - 8 or No – 14

31. When you are on a computer typing an essay, do you find yourself wanting to click on other screens on your computer? (for example, you are on a word document writing an essay and you are thinking about clicking on iChat to see who is on) Yes - 11 or No - 12
32. Do you often type your writing prompt or do you often write it by hand? Why?

33. What is your favorite technology device and why?

34. Do you have a specific technology device that distracts you more than other technology devices?

35. Do you have a specific time in the evening that you complete homework? If so, when? Yes - 11 or No - 12

36. Where do you generally complete your homework? Is it near a computer, near video games, etc? Please explain.

37. Do you do your homework near your parents or legal guardians? Yes – 9 or No – 9 or Sometimes 5

38. If you are working on a computer and end up off task, what gets you back to your work?

39. Do you use any strategies to prevent yourself from getting distracted from technology? If so, what are they? (For example, you move away from your video games or shut off all of the communication programs on your computer)

40. Do you think that learning strategies would help you to avoid distractions with technology? Yes - 14 or No – 7 or Didn’t Answer - 1
41. Do you think technology is going to become a greater distraction for you as you get older?
   Yes – 14 or No – 7 or Didn’t Answer - 1

42. Do you have any older siblings? Yes - 12 or No -10

43. If yes to the previous question, do you notice your siblings getting distracted by technology?
   Yes – 8 or No – 4 or Didn’t Answer - 5

44. When you are completing homework, do you find yourself multi-tasking? (multi-tasking is
doing more than one thing at a time) Yes - 14 or No – 16 or Sometimes 2

45. Do you find that you concentrate better when you are multi-tasking? Yes - 11 or No – 1 or
   Didn’t Answer - 1

46. Do you think that it takes you longer to complete your homework when you are multi-
tasking? Yes – 8 or No – 12 or Sometimes - 1

47. Do you think that you get your work done faster when you are multi-tasking? Yes – 8 or No
   – 11 or Sometimes - 2

48. Do you listen to music while you are doing homework? Yes - 9 or No – 11 or Sometimes - 2

49. If yes, what type of music do you listen to?

50. Do you find yourself playing video games every evening? Yes or No

Appendix C

Parent/Guardian Technology Survey
Child’s Name: ______________ Parent Signature: ______________________

Please circle the answer that best represents the impact that technology has on your child. Please mark NS if you are not sure of the answer to a particular question. When completed, please return this survey to school with your child by **Thursday March 4, 2010**. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Please feel free to elaborate on the lines provided for any or all of the questions.

*If your child has a cell phone, please answer the following questions.*
*If your child does not have a cell phone, please skip to question number 6.*

1. **Does your child either change the volume of his/her cell phone to silent or vibrate or shut off his or her phone when completing homework?** Yes - 4 or No - 6 or NS or NA 4

2. **Do you feel that your child’s cell phone distracts him/her while he/she is working on homework?** (For example, he/she is working on the weekly writing prompt and the phone rings, does he/she stop doing work to talk on the phone?) Yes - 2 or No – 7 or NS or NA - 5

3. **When your child is on the computer completing homework at home (including research), do you ever find that your child leaves the homework to search the web for unrelated topics, chat with friends, log into social networking sites, play online games, or participate in any other technology related activities that are unrelated to the homework?** Yes - 5 or No - 5 or NS -1 or NA - 3

4. **Do you find your child spending a lot of time playing video games on weekday evenings?** Yes – 3 or No - 8 or NS or NA - 3

5. **Do you find you child choosing fonts and/or colors before beginning to type his or her assignments or before proofreading assignments?** Yes - 3 or No - 4 or NS – 4 or NA - 3

6. **Do you find yourself encouraging your child to get back on task while completing homework because he or she has been immersed in some type of technology activity?** Yes - 6 or No - 7 or NS or NA -1

7. **If your child is completing homework and finds himself/herself off task, what does your child do to get back on task?**
- She puts her phone out of reach.
- Just focus
- The only time she gets off task is if she is too tired. Then she sleeps and gets back on task.
- Goes to room with radio.
- Turn off or move away from the object that is distracting them.
- He pretty much stays on track with his work.
- He does not find himself distracted.
- Refocuses
- Sometimes he will redirect himself, but most of the time, I will redirect.
- Sometimes if the tv is on and she is in the living room, she may get distracted but she usually leaves and goes to her room where it is quiet.
- Does not apply. She self-regulates extremely well.
- Take a break then return to study. Engage in conversation.

8. **Are you, as the parent or guardian, the person who gets your child back on task when he/she is spending too much time immersed in technology?** Yes - 7 or No - 7 or NS
   - Not an issue
   - This doesn’t happen with her.
   - And older sisters too.
   - If I see it, I point them in the right direction. They have and do re-direct themselves.
   - He gets his work done without spending too much time immersed in technology.
   - Encourage technology
   - I do spend time pulling them off the technology at times, but I can only allow use when there are no other tasks.
   - There is usually a time limit set. Though her father does not agree because she is very discipline, I still believe in limitations to these things.
   - Self-motivated

9. **Do you have any children older than your student in 6th grade?** Yes or No
   
   If yes, do you notice your older children getting distracted by technology?
   Yes – 4 or No - 6 or NS -1

10. **Do you think that it takes your child longer to complete homework when he/she is multi-tasking with technology? (For example, listening to music, watching t.v., surfing the web, etc)**
    Yes - 9 or No - 3 or NS – 2
    - music seems to help
    - It depends on the task. If the task is easy, listening to music can help, but it would hinder for more academically challenging issues.
    - There would be great distractions. Sometimes if the tv is on, she will get side tracked.
    - She does not multi-task. She focuses on one thing at a time.

11. **Are you worried that technology distraction will become a greater problem for your child, as he/she gets older?** Yes - 9 or No - 3 or NS – 3
Technology has not interfered to date with my children and their ability to do well in school. It is an issue to be aware of though.
- Not sure – could help
- He is not dependent on us for things, but e feel he needs another year or two.
- I would love to learn more about self-monitoring strategies.
- Always helpful to arm them with positive strategies

12. Do you think that teaching self-monitoring strategies could help your child with study habits and to avoid becoming distracted by technology in this new world of 21st century technology? Yes - 10 or No or NS - 3

Appendix D

Faculty Technology Survey
1. How often do you have your students use computers or laptops in your classroom? Please circle one of the options below.

   Everyday - 7
   3 to 4 times a week - 9
   1 to 2 times a week - 14
   Never – 4
   ? - 3

2. Do you find that you have to prompt the students to get them back on task when using computers/laptops (example: the students are typing writing prompts on Google Docs and you observe them checking email or surfing the web.)

   Yes - 5
   No - 8
   Sometimes – 22
   No Answer – 3

- Since our time is instructional or project development oriented, use is structured and on-task.
- Listening to music
- The only time this arises is in the morning. Some students do not want to give up the laptops in order to listen to morning announcements. When I assign a task, students are very good at sticking to the task. Their computer use is monitored.
- Not during instructional class time but sometimes during AREA quiet study or recess times.
- During classroom time, they are ok, but during study hall/AREA/unstructured time
- My laptop usage involves self-teaching/ DI instruction. Students are only permitted to go there.
- I recommend activities for technological items at home (e.g., iPods, YouTube, iTunes, etc). In school the hardware that they are to use is their instrument.
- Certain students are more distracted than others but many students need reminders to stay on task.
- Most of the time they are on task during class. Certainly they are doing all these things (emails, etc) in study periods and AREA

3. **Do you find that your students focus better when they don’t have their laptops sitting in front of them when you are showing them how to use a program on the computer?**

   Yes - 22
   No - 4
   Maybe – 6
   No Answer – 6

- Yes, but time is critical so I use the 3 finger rule to keep lids closed during instruction.
- Same effect when we are learning/playing new things with the guitars – i.e. new skills, fingerings
- Explain with laptops closed then let them open it.
- It depends on the lesson. If having a laptop in front of them would be deemed by me to be a distraction. I do not allow them to have one until I’ve made the necessary intro. More often, however, I want them to follow along with me and duplicate at their desks what I model on the projection unit.
- I’ve tried many strategies, but I find if we do the 3 finger rule first and I show the activity then they catch on better to the program.
- They must close the lid three fingers wide so they may not use their laptops.
- Close lids while instruction/directions are given.
- We usually model the procedures.
- This was evident when we taught PDF and attachments.
- I must make sure they close the computers – otherwise, they pay no attention to me.

4. **Do you feel that it affects their focus?**

   Yes - 22
   No - 3
   Maybe – 8
   No Answer - 5

5. **How do you feel about students becoming distracted by technology use?**

- Positive distraction at times because they get so involved in searching for a certain topic that it leads to a deeper understanding. For a less motivated students, they find themselves going off in different directions and unable to refocus their attention.
- I don’t like it when students are not attentive any time I am instructing; computer or not.
- It depends on the definition of “distracted.” Many adults are guilty of that. Outside of school we cannot control that. In our classrooms we are obligated to minimize their distraction by constant observation and appropriate lesson design.
- The students are very good with using the technology. Most of them stay on task and enjoy it.
- They don’t get distracted.
- Students need to be more closely monitored or more sights need to be blocked to avoid distractions.
- Once students are engaged in a specific activity involving technology, they usually stay on task.
- If they are not on task such as direction time, they will find something to distract them on the computer.
- This hasn’t been an issue other than students choosing to use laptops for personal amusement rather than schoolwork on occasions. This only applies to one or two students who need to give up recess or AREA to make up work.
- Frustrated
- The advantage of using technology outweighs the disadvantage of being distracted. If we could reduce the distraction we could have the best of both worlds.
- Often my students get distracted with Googling pictures. I always show them how our library home page for 6th grade has many options.
- Technology can be such a great asset to the curriculum; however, some students take advantage of these opportunities.
- It is frustrating when the same student plays games or emails when they did not have permission or were to be doing something else important.
- If they do – its adults who have modeled it and promoted it who have contributed.
- As long as we’re able to refocus them, its part of the process that they get distracted.
- They need time with and without computers.
- Not a fan
- There are so many different distractions now-a-days for these kids, technology is yet another one.
- It’s an important component and students need to work responsibly with the technology tool. It’s an ongoing process to learn self-monitoring strategies.
- I don’t see them distracted by it in my classroom. They are distracted by video games at home.
- Technology as a tool is most useful when students are given explicit instructions and limited time. Technology distracts some students from their priorities of school assignments. (ex. Games vs. assignments during AREA)
- It is necessary or unavoidable part of technology in the classroom.
- Technology is extremely distracting unless used in tightly controllable environments. Teachers must use monitoring strategies to ensure students are on task and are efficiently using the computer.
- Natural – I even get distracted on the computer – check emails/surf
- If students are engaged in their project, they are less likely to be distracted by email and Internet surfing. Its important for teachers to be careful when planning technology – driven projects (they should be highly motivating)
- If I used computers more I could easily see it being a problem.
- I know they are. More often, its cell phone use at the high school.
- Students tend to expect the use of technology. They are surprised when I ask them to write. When I give the choice to type or write, I do receive more paper products than Google docs.
- It slows down their process of completing their work. Sometimes doing assignments on laptops takes longer.
- I love being able to use technology in my classroom, but feel like a police officer making students stay on task.
- I see it as the same problem as when they are distracted by other things not technology related. It is a normal part of teaching.
- I don’t see this as a problem in my class. I get the feeling that it is a major part of students’ focus outside of class. I hear them say that they are multi-tasking when doing homework.
- I think that it is a big distraction. I keep close tabs on computer use in my classroom. I make it clear to my students that computers are only to be used for schoolwork. I monitor closely.
- They are fine when focusing on a specific program.
- It is a part of the nature of the Internet. I ask kids to set and meet a goal within a specific amount of time. Time them.

6. Do you feel that students need to be taught self-monitoring strategies when they are immersed in 21st century technology so students are capable of refocusing their attention.

   Yes - 32
   No - 0
   Maybe – 6

- This seems to be a major problem in business where people are working independently. The ethics of technology use during the workday would make for interesting discussion. I’m amazed by the constant use of iPods – which seems to cut down on conversation opportunities on the bus etc. In general the laptops are very motivating and doing assessment on the computer seems to really capture their attention (podcasts, pp, iMovies). I don’t get twitter, but I also don’t see 7th graders using that. Facebook is very popular and my estimation is that about 85% of the kids have Facebook accounts. Also, phone texting is a major communication.
- Yes….and use of technology should be beneficial and for a purpose, not simply for its own sake.
- Self-monitoring strategies (just like “test taking’ strategies” or “note taking strategies”) will work only when a student buys into them and acknowledges his/her responsibility in the process. Think about the different strategies for different grade levels.
- Self-monitoring strategies should be taught for all sorts of behaviors. For example, my generation needed to be taught how to be discriminating user of 20th century technology. Kids should self-monitor when they’re reading, doing math, socializing (look at today’s college students and the osculating problems with drinking, etc)
- And some adults
- They need to learn how to think for themselves and monitor their own progress.
- For some, it comes naturally, but others need directions/instruction in self-monitoring strategies.
- But not exclusive to technology. Students distracted by technology are generally the most distracted students regardless of the setting.
- It needs to be included in the actual instruction, focus, and efficient usage. You have to overcome poor habits developed at home.
- I think as they mature, they or most will learn to do this on their own.
- It goes with manners. No doubt
- So important! The schools will need to teach strategies. When will we fit this in our schedule?
- Yes! Goal setting, time work with timed “reward”

**Appendix E**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>February 17, 2010</th>
<th>April 14, 2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>16 Computers</td>
<td>23 computers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teaching Students How To Email</td>
<td>Writing Informative Speeches</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Typing when the teacher was explaining directions; not supposed to be typing</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Playing an online game</td>
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<td>8.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Made a “monkey” out of computer symbols; when he needed to make a PDF after the explanation, he couldn't do so</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making Keynote presentation with pictures and photos; speech not written, but lots of pictures</td>
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<td>13.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
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<td>15.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Looking at pictures when the teacher was explaining the directions</td>
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<td>16.</td>
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<td>Adding events to Google calendar</td>
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<td>20.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Watched another student make the “monkey” out of symbols;</td>
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**Appendix G**
Name ________________________________
Date _____________________
Activity ________________________________

Did you use a strategy? Yes or No

If you did, what strategy did you use? Please check!
1. Used a reminder post-it note ______
2. Set a goal for myself ______
3. Set a reward for myself ______
4. Used “3 Finger Rule” ______
5. Turned off technological devices/programs ______

Appendix H

| Name | Date | | | | | |
|------|------|---|---|---|---|
|      |      | | | | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Used</th>
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<td>1. Used a reminder post-it note</td>
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<td>2. Set a goal for myself</td>
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<td>3. Set a reward for myself</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Used “3 Finger Rule”</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Turned off other technological devices or programs</td>
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## Appendix I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Writing Prompt 3-22 to 2-25</th>
<th>SS Website 3-24-10</th>
<th>Math Homework 3-23-10</th>
<th>SS Website 3-26-10</th>
<th>Spelling Homework 2-35-10</th>
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Appendix J

Interview Questions for Mount Nittany Middle School librarian
As the librarian at MNMS, how do you use technology to teach and to utilize as a tool for the library?

As the librarian, you have the opportunity to work with all grade levels, how do you feel technology distraction is different amongst different grade levels?

How do you feel about technology distraction?

Do you think self-monitoring strategies will have an affect on the students?

Interview Response Notes
- Time
- Eager
- More with technology in 5th grade impacts 6th grade
- *Need to construct lessons to keep focus
- *narrow down resources available to students (World Book Online)
- teach how to use Google effectively
- wait until a concept is taught before allowing the student to use it
- why do we assume they are ready to handle the Internet with out instruction?
- co-teaching has a positive impact as there are more teacher eyes around the room to monitor and redirect when students’ laptop screens are not always within view
- have the student complete the demo so that the teacher can be in the back of the room to monitor
- distraction can hold up the rest of the class
- very similar to teaching kids not to talk to neighbor during class
- laptop expectations should be included in class rules/setting expectations in the beginning of the school year.
- Have the students close their computers and use the three finger rule
- Technology can be less distracting because it is more dependable in this day and age…think back to when we had computer trouble and spent half the class period fixing it
- Make students more self-aware by using strategies
- The students could make notes of how they concentrate/focus best, put on a Google doc, then keep in their files to look at when they need to be reminded to focus.
- Attention issue with ADD or ADHD students…do you think technology gives them another tool for distraction?
Appendix K

Writing Prompt:
Now that we have been using five different strategies to refocus our minds when using the laptops and other technology devices or programs, tell me which strategy works best for you and why. This can be one paragraph with a clear introduction, at least three supporting details, and a conclusion.

Here are the five strategies that we have been working with.

1. use a reminder post-it notes
2. set a goal for yourself
3. set a reward for yourself
4. use the “3 finger rule
5. turn off other technological devices or programs

Student Responses:

* Have you ever been distracted by technology? I have heard of a great way to help and it is called the “3 finger” rule. The three-finger rule is when you are using a laptop and you are trying to listen to someone. If you are using a laptop you put it down until only three fingers can fit in the gap. When you do this you can’t play with your computer while you listen. The “3 finger” technique is my favorite technique.

* A reward is something I can look forward to. Setting a reward helps me because I know that if I get this work done something fun will be next, I don’t rush my work either. For me to get a reward I have to have proper, full and neat work. That is why rewards are best for me.

* For the last few weeks my classmates and I have been using strategies suggested by our intern to help us stay on task when using technology. There are five of these strategies. The strategy that I found most useful was to turn off all electronic devices. By turning off my electric devices I wasn’t distracted by the beeps of a new email or other things like that. If I am doing my homework near a computer I am tempted to check my email or see who is on Skype. It would just be easier to turn off all my electronic devices. The strategy that helped me the most was when I turned off the technological device that I was using. I tried all of the strategies, but this one seemed to work the most for me. This one made it so that I wouldn’t be tempted to turn the device on again or play with it. When it was off, it seemed so much easier to concentrate. Also, when I did turn the device off, I would put it somewhere away from me. To me turning the device off was the best strategy to use.

* I get distracted by technology sometimes. Ways that people use to stop themselves from wandering off to other sites are using a reminder post-it note, set a goal for yourself, set a reward for yourself, use the "3 finger rule, and turn off all technology devices. The strategy that works best for me is the reminder post-it note. I don't get distracted by technology much but when I do the post-it note is there to stop me from getting off topic. The post-it note isn't the only strategy that works for me the "3 finger rule also works but I don't use it that much because I don't have a laptop at home we have a computer and computers' screens don't go down so I can't use this
strategy that much. The post-it note helps me because it tells me not to wander so I don't wander. If I forget not to wander the post-it note will remind me so I won't wander. The post-it note doesn't work every time because sometimes I don't see it. Post-it notes have there ups and downs to helping me with being distracted by other websites. Sometimes I can't find post-it notes so I can't use them so I use another strategy. In conclusion post-it notes are helpful when it comes to being reminded not to go to other websites. I think the post-it note works the best for me but not everyone. Other kids might use the other strategies like set a goal, set a reward, use the "3 finger rule, and turn off technology. These strategies have made me better at work and not wandering to other websites.

* When I shut my computer down, it keeps me from being distracted when the teacher is talking. It helps me because I look at the computer more than I pay attention. If I had it up, I would go to sites that the teacher is telling me before I forget it and stuff. When I am at my friends, I close the lid when he is talking to me.

* A strategy that works for me is to turn off technology while I do homework. I usually listen to music but I turn it off if it is distracting me. If I have to study for a test or just have to work on homework, it would be too distracting if I have electronics or any other technological device in front of me. If one of my friends happen to text me on my phone, I would either ignore them and keep working or text them back and say I can’t talk because I’m doing homework I’ll talk you later. Technology for me is fun to use, but it can also be distracting. This is why I chose this strategy.

* The strategy that helps me the most is #2. Setting a goal for my self. One, reason is I get something after I get done. Second, It’s a good system to work on. Third, I could go outside and play with my friends. In conclusion setting a goal for your self is a good system, you get something, and you get to play with friends.

*“What is not started today is never finished tomorrow.”
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

We’ve been learning and using different strategies to refocus our minds when using the laptops and/or other technology devices or programs, and I have a favorite out of the 5 strategies we’ve learned. I believe that if one doesn’t even know where they are going, they can’t expect to get there. Goals are what define one’s destination. Without goals, and plans to get there, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination. I think that setting a goal for myself has worked the best for me. I think so because you can use that for a lot of things, not just using technology, you can use it for getting things done on time, making sure you don’t slack off when doing work, etc. Goals help me achieve what I set out to do. I call goals “dreams with deadlines”. In today’s world, distraction is in every nook and cranny. There are phones, computers, video games, TVs... These things can make children lose track of time, and divert their attention from their work to something else. If you have a goal, though, you would remember that, and not get distracted from the work until you’re done. Therefore, you should always have a goal when you have any important work to do. Third, I think that goals are important in every aspect of life. Aim for the stars, and maybe you will reach the sky. It is impossible to accomplish anything unless you have a goal. For example, if I want to become a lawyer, or a doctor, I have to start working towards that goal now, or else I’d be like a ship, lost, without a goal. A life is not lost if
one’s goal is not achieved, but a life is lost if there is no goal to reach. One needs to set a goal and then gradually aim towards it with dedication and commitment. For these three reasons, I think that goal setting is a sure way to keep me on a steady path to success. And that’s why I always set high goals for myself, no matter how small or large the task is. “Set your goals high, and don’t stop until you get there.”

-Bo Jackson

* Do you get distracted by technology? I do, so I use a strategy, “Turn off all other technological devices or programs”. Turning off TV’s and computers help me for many reasons. The first reason is because I always think to my self, “Let me check my email, it will only take a second”, but then I just keep on doing things on the computer and I never get back to my homework or the thing I’m doing. If the computer is off, I know it will take time to turn it on, and log in and everything else, so I won’t go on the computer. My second reason is because if the computer is off, then there won’t be that much noise such as a notification that I got a new message. My last reason is if I turn off a program when I’m doing my Writing Prompt or something else, I won’t go back to the program and do things on it and never get my homework done. Even though technology is very useful, it can also be very distracting. Turning off programs on your computer or technological devices can be a very effective way to keep yourself on task.

* This year Miss Wilson is doing a project about kids and technology. She is asking if anyone gets distracted by these new things such as cell phones, laptops, and PSP or DS. Miss Wilson came up with a list of 5 strategies to help us not get so distracted. For me, I think I mostly, or commonly use is number #2 and #3. #2 is set a goal for yourself. #3 is set a reward for yourself. I use #3 at home when doing homework and #2 at school doing schoolwork. I think these two strategies have helped me deal with paying more attention and getting things done quicker. I think these strategies have gotten me to focus more on my work too. Now I usually set a reward of candy or a snack like pretzels or chips. I think Miss Wilson’s strategies have helped me this year.

* Do you know your favorite way to keep yourself from getting distracted from technology? Well I do and my favorite way is to just keep all technological devices off. This one helps me most because I have a low attention span and I’m easily distracted, so it’s better if everything is just off. This also helps me because I like typing better than writing so once again it is better if everything like cell phones and web-chats are just off. So as you can see I have some good reasons for choosing to keep it all off.

* I have learned many strategies to stay on task while using technology. I think turning off the technology works best for me. First of all when I do the three finger rule I just lift the screen up and keep going. If I put post-it note on it I will just rip it off and ignore it. But if I turn it off I'm not just going to turn it on and waste a whole minute of my life that could have been working time. Out of all the strategies turning the technology devise works the best for me.

* Personally, I think that all the strategies are ingenious. The strategy that works best for me is the three finger rule. This strategy works best for me for three reasons. One, it never fails. If the screen is that low, you can’t focus on it, unless, of course you get bored. Also, it’s real
easy to do: computer lid down, done. That’s it. Finally, it’s not time consuming, all it takes is a ½ second and your ready. Those are my three reasons the three finger rule is great.

* In the following paragraph I’m going to tell you the strategy that worked best for me. The strategy that worked best for me is the reminder sticky note. This worked best for me because it is on the same place as the scores. So every time I try to look at the scores I see the sticky note. That is why it worked best for me.

* A reward is something I can look forward to. Setting a reward helps me because I know that if I get this work done something fun will be next. I don't rush my work either. For me to get a reward my work has to be proper, complete, and neat! That is why setting a reward is best for me.

* Out of the five strategies to prevent yourself from getting distracted while working, I find setting a reward the most effective. There are many reasons for this, one being the fact that it motivates you to get the job done instead of procrastinating. Second, you get to reward yourself after working hard so you will feel better when working other at other times. Finally, once you have your reward, you will be able to focus better. There are many reasons that this method is effective.

* Do you have strategies to keep you on task when you’re working? Well I sure do. The strategy that I use that helps me the most is the turn off other technological devices or programs. This helps a lot because for example, when I'm working on homework on my bedroom floor I always have the TV on. So it takes longer to do my work, but by using the rule turn off other technological devices or programs I can easily get my work done quickly. Also when I have my phone near I get of track and loose my train of thought when it beeps. So therefore, I put it away on vibrate when I'm working, then I get better work done. Also with this rule when I'm writing my writing prompt, I want to go on the Internet or something when I can’t think of what to say. Then when I come back I totally don’t remember what to say. So I block the Internet until I'm done with my writing prompt. This strategy is very helpful to get my work done right and quickly. I’ve been really enjoying this strategy. By getting my work done faster I've been able to finish then reward myself with my technical objects. So really I use two strategies but my favorite is turn off other technological devices or programs.

* For Miss. Wilson’s Tracking of technology I think the best rule for me is rule #3 the 3 finger rule. This helps when teachers and students are talking to me or to the whole class. This also helps me to not be so tempting to type or play. This is also helpful when I need to go or leave the classroom.

* Out of all the strategies that our teacher, Miss Wilson taught us, I would pick only one that I think best helps me. I bet you are wandering “Well, are you going to tell me?” My strategy that I think most helps me is the Post-It Note strategy. This helps me for two main reasons 1.) The Post-It Notes come in vibrant colors so you remember to look at it, and 2.) It does not take that much time to write a Post-It Note. So, now I have told you why it helps me, and now I am going to explain it.
My first example to why The Post-It Note strategy helps me the best is that The Post-It Notes come in vibrant colors so that you remember to look at it. This helps you because many people think that bright or vibrant colors catch your eye so you begin to look and read it. So, when these bright colors catch your eye and you read it, it reminds you to not check email, play computer games, or anything that can take up time of your homework. This helps me because the colors can be right in front of me and I can see that I shouldn’t do anything until after my homework which I do at school or right when I get home.

My last reason to why Post-It Note strategy helps me the best is that it does not take that much time to write a Post-It Note. It only takes about a few seconds so you can use the strategy quickly. This can help many students that are busy through-out the day and cannot think of a goal or a reward because they are so busy. So, when you are in a hurry, and you have an extra piece of paper or a Post-It Note, write down that you cannot check email or play computer games while you are doing your homework. I think that this is the most helpful strategy, but decide for yourself!

* Technology is distracting but it really doesn’t distract me as much. If I’m on the computer typing up a paper for school, I can usually keep myself on task pretty well. Mostly because (a.) I don’t have a Facebook or Myspace and (b.) My email can wait. However typing on the computer is boring, and there’s always something else I would rather be doing. That’s why somewhere between strategies two and three works best for me. Before I start working I’ll set a goal for myself, then once I reach that goal if I start loosing focus or if I’m getting bored or off task I’ll give myself a break of about ten to fifteen minutes or so. By the time I get back to work my mind is on work. That is why somewhere between strategies two and three works best for me.

Appendix L

Post Intervention
Student Survey

Name: ____________________________________________

Please circle:

1. Do you feel that technology distracts you?
   Yes - 12
   No – 5
   Sometimes – 5

2. Have the technology distraction strategies helped you to focus better in class?
   Yes – 13
   No - 9
3. Have the technology distraction strategies helped you to focus better at home?
   Yes – 14
   No – 8

4. Which strategy worked the best for you?
   1. Used a reminder post-it note - 3
   2. Set a goal for myself - 5
   3. Set reward for myself - 3
   4. Use “3 finger rule” - 4
   5. Turn off technological devices/programs - 7

5. Did you find yourself using the strategies more at home or at school?
   Home - 9
   School - 11

Annotated Bibliography


This article, geared towards helping college students succeed, addresses the positive and negative impacts that the Internet can have on a students’ learning and academic performance. The Internet can be used as a valuable tool for researching, studying, and writing, but can serve as a major distraction if not used alongside strategies. This cyberslacking can affect student performance. This article provides twenty-five effective strategies that students can use to help curb the distractions that the Internet poses. Strategies range from physically separating oneself from the technological distraction to reminding oneself of consequences of not completing the work. This article begins with a short description then moves quickly into the list of twenty-five strategies with explanations of how to implement this strategy and how it can help. I will be using this article in order to help devise strategies to incorporate into the classroom. Many of the strategies could be used for middle school students, both in the classroom and at home. Given
twenty-five strategies, it will allow me to differentiate the strategies according to the personality of the class I am working with. It will also allow me to provide the students with multiple options for strategies so that individual students can find strategies that work most effectively for them; therefore, lending differentiated instruction into this inquiry. It will also allow me to compare which strategy is becoming the most effective and to make claims as to whether one strategy is better than another or if it is based on individual students.


This research journal identifies a variety of benefits and risks involved with the Internet including: consumer life, work life, leisure life, social life, education life, and community life. This journal begins by taking a look at the conceptual aspects of the Internet then explains each of the key components in greater detail. For this inquiry, I looked specifically at the education aspects of the Internet, which focuses upon five major benefits and three major disadvantages. The data collection to make claims shows the evidence of the impact technology has on society. I will be using this scholarly journal to have a holistic view of the Internet’s impact on society. I will be able to utilize some of the benefits and risks and incorporate those factors into survey questions. This journal will allow me to survey or interview the students about the types of benefits that they feel they receive. Taking a look at the data collection has assisted me in my data collection decisions.


This Internet article looks at the how to help middle school students set limits at home when it comes to using laptops or computers. Jim Heynderickx looks at how students’ homework time has now transformed into a time of socialization, watching YouTube videos, and playing games. What happened to sitting down and quietly completing your homework at the kitchen table? This article provides a list of seven strategies that parents can use to monitor
student behavior and strategies that students can use to self monitor their own work. This article addresses topics such as appropriate places to use computers, appropriate lengths of time to use the computer, and setting personal boundaries for chatting online. This is another source that will allow me to utilize strategy suggestions. This article will become increasingly important when it comes to working with the parents to help promote strategies for self-monitoring with technology distractions. Specifically, this article addresses middle school students, which allows me to get a better idea of strategies that will work with pre-teens and young teens.


This Internet article by Scholastic Books takes a look at the cognitive, biological, and psychological effects that multi-tasking with technology has on students. This article interviews a psychologist and neuropsychologist where I was able to learn more about the effects that multitasking with technology has on the brain of children. It also addresses the importance of promoting self-control for academic success and provides ways in which students can learn self-control and self-monitoring strategies. There is a debate in today’s society in terms of whether multitasking is an effective means of learning or if it is a greater distraction than an effective tool. Rosen discusses how many students of the 21st century believe they are strong multi-taskers, but evidence proves otherwise. It paints a picture of students plugging in with iPhones, earphone, laptops, etc before beginning their homework. This article stands to believe that effective learning cannot take place with over stimulation. I will utilize this article for its’ professional opinions and suggested strategies from professionals. This article provides evidence and some data to back up my beliefs that technology is becoming a major distraction to students while they work and study. These strategies from professionals will serve as a basis for the strategies that I offer to the students, ranging from logging off to creating a distraction free zone to study.

Pierce, T.A. (n.d.). Distracted: academic performance differences between teen users
Researchers at the California State University conducted a study to evaluate the academic performance differences between teen users and non-users of Myspace, cell phones, and the Internet in general. Solid statistics demonstrate how students who are engaged with these technological devices on a consistent basis are scoring lower on tests and their schoolwork than students who separate themselves from technology to focus on their schoolwork. This journal begins by examining social networking sites and teens’ use of cell phones. Then it takes a look at how media affects the academic performance. While this journal predominately concentrates on teenagers, and my students are pre-teens, this will allow me to see what will happen to our students in the next year or two as they emerge into their teen years. By the look of these statistics, this article will allow me to prove the dire need for interventions in the preteen years as a way to prevent the lowered academic performance due to technological devices. This journal also explains the measures that were taken for the survey, so I can utilize that information when forming my own survey questions for my class. For example, the survey asked students to record how often they put off homework to spend time on instant messengers, cell phones, and other technological devices.


Brenda Pitoine’s brief takes a closer look at the brain development of adolescence in this “hyper tech” world as she coins it. In this article, she examines how multitasking is affecting the brain of our tween students. Specifically, it addresses the need to help the students develop routines at a young age that will guide them to become self sufficient with monitoring themselves and their multitasking habits. Additionally, it also addresses the question in regards to whether students are actually learning when they are multitasking. Through research, she has made the claim that while students believe multitasking allows them to get more done faster, it is
actually quite the opposite, as they are not concentrating on the work they are doing. Studies show that the amount of time it takes the brain to move from one task to another is hindering the level of learning taking place. Pitoine quotes researchers who believe, the learned knowledge is depleting because one cannot attend to material as effectively when his or her mind is concentrating on some many other stimulations. This is another source that will serve as a basis for the proof that this is a major concern in schools and in homes. As I am planning on having class meetings to discuss the interventions and strategies with my students, I think I may take parts of this study out and use it to show my students how their multi tasking may be effecting their lives or it may in the future if it isn’t now. For the students who are skeptical of strategies and believe that they are successful multi-taskers, this will show them that they may need to take a second look at this habit.


Sonia Livingstone analyzes how the Internet is used by children and how children are influenced by many aspects of the Internet. Livingstone interviews students in the United Kingdom. In comparing the data, the use of technology with children is strikingly similar to the data in the United States. This book is divided into chapters consisting of: changing childhood, changing media, youthful experts, learning/education, communication/identity, participating/civic engagement, risk/harm, media/digital literacy, and balancing online opportunities and risks. The youthful experts chapter takes a closer look at the online activities that students are engaging in to explore, learning, create, share, communicate, and network. Statistics of the percentage of 9-19 years olds that engage in technology activities proves that students are actively engaged in using the computer/Internet for a variety of wants and needs. Using a book that surveys students in another area of the world where technology is used just as often allows me to see what other countries are doing to keep academic learning occurring in the day and age of technology advancement. I can use this information specifically to decide which aspects of the Internet to concentrate on with my class. For example, 70% of the surveyed population ended up playing games online while only 28% find themselves visiting sports websites on a daily basis. I will also be utilizing the education/learning aspect of the book to
help make connections between the amount of time students are required to be online for research and creating work for class in comparison to how often students are off task by completing personal searches and communicating.


Anastasia Goodstein’s *Totally Wired Teens* takes a look at what teens and tweens are doing online. This book is divided into taking a look at a totally wired teen, diaries go digital, social networking sites, bullying goes digital, parental controls, teaching the teachers, and the power shift of technology. For this inquiry, I looked specifically at the parental and teacher components of this book. Goodstein examines how there is a divide in the number of parents who truly understand what their children can be doing online. With a generation gap where children of the 21st century are growing up with technology distractions and risks, many adults do not know the terminology or how to work all of the technology. This book emphasized the importance of parents getting plugged in as well so that they know what their children could be doing. When a child sits down at their computer and is typing away, a parent may believe they are working hard on their homework, but in reality could have been spending hours on Facebook, iTunes, IM chart, etc. I will be using this information to help create surveys for the parents and guardians of my students. I will also use this information to get a better idea of what impact parents should have on their students’ use of computers. Although I want students to develop their own self-monitoring strategies, it is essential that I work with the parents and guardians to ensure that they are aware of the strategies that I will be teaching their students. This book provided me with a look into how parents view their child’s use of the Internet and other technology devices.

Jeremy Reimer combines data from the New York Times, in which the effects of multitasking on performance is evaluated. This site looks at the constant interruptions that lead individuals to become distracted from their work. From phone calls to emails to instant messages, there are constant disruptions in this world of 21st century technology. Studies from the New York Times highlights how multitasking can slow a person down from being productive, and it can allow for a greater increase in mistakes. In fact, this website tells the audience to leave the multi-tasking to the computers, not to the person. After this site evaluates the effects of technology on society and effective work, it also describes the strategies and ways to manage this new found dilemma while in its infancy stage. This website fits into my inquiry as it combines the negative effects of technology interruptions with facts of research verifying that multitasking may not be the most effective way to work efficiently. This is more data that I can use to compile to show my students the reason behind why we are going to implement strategies while the students are still young.


A newspaper article by the Washington Post examines whether multi-tasking helps or hinders students’ academic work. Although not proven either way due to lack of research, there was a study performed where students were given cards to look at with sound in the background for some and not for others. This case study proved that the students who were not multitasking where able to describe the cards in more detail than the students who were listening to the music while memorizing the cards. This article looks at the student perspective vs. the researchers perspective. Many students feel that it is necessary to be plugged in because homework help is just an IM away; however, research is taking a different perspective on it. It is also takes a look at the benefits of multi-tasking, in that it trains students to work under any situation. The real question that this article poses is whether learning is taking place when plugged in? For this inquiry, I found the case study performed to be of interest to me. I may try to simulate the sound and card exercise with individual students in my class in order to compare the effects that multitasking has on their ability to concentrate and obtain information. I have been interested in
having the students perform an isolated case exercise or simulation to examine the effects and this seems as if it could be the tool that I have been looking for.