



GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



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Thoughts for the Week



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One of the more dramatic issues facing schools and families these days is the overuse of the internet, social media and video games. Each of these areas of a developing technology has moved dramatically beyond some of their earlier manifestations. The games that now engage students tend to be linked player games, so that an entire community of players engages in the same game, sharing the video landscape and actions. The problem stems from the addictive power of these visually stimulating and engaging media.

This topic always come up at any educational meeting or discussion, since most schools know that there is a segment of the population that is engaged in excessive video game use or internet use. We all know that once we are on a computer or a game, hours can simply disappear. It is no secret that once you start checking email, or gaming or chatting, time seems to drift away. How often have we thought I just check my email and an hour or two evaporates.

Unlike reading, the internet or that video game does much of the imaginative work for us. When we lose ourselves in reading, we need to create the images that the words present through an act of cognitive imagination. A landscape, a character, a scene in a book needs to be recreated in the mind of the reader through an active act of the imagination and imaging. The reader shares in the creative process. In a video game, the landscape environment is fully imagined by the programmer and the participant doesn't need to recreated the imaginary landscape but simply navigate it. While this requires some eye-hand coordination on the part of the participant, it does not require the active and creative imaginative act that occurs in reading. The participant accepts the context created by others unlike the reader who recreates that context.

This difference is crucial to the development of intellectual skills. All activities can become addictive; however, an addictive activity that doesn't train and strengthen the imagination ultimately creates a more negative and less developed sense of the world and of oneself. The world of a video game is intrinsic; the world of a book is extrinsic.

Garden School prepares creative and critical thinkers for success in the world who engage in the language of imagination, creation and thought. Garden School's mission is to "recognize each student's individual identity" and create independent thinkers who engage in the world, who enlighten our society and who recreate our world into a community of learners and thinkers. Those skills and that sense of self come from active reflection on a healthy and complete perspective on the world and from vigorous intellectual engagement.