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<u>Internet Addiction</u>

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my opinion on the issue of Internet addiction. The fact that many school children spend long hours surfing the Internet is prevalent. Whenever you walk past a cyber café, you are bound to see school children sitting in front of the computers. You may ask if they are doing the homework with the computers. Regrettably, the answer is not and they are just hooked on computer games. Nowadays, seldom do we see students struggle with their studies. What's more, they are reluctant to do physical exercise, not to mention doing revision. Worse still, students are preoccupied with games. How can they concentrate on their studies? In fact, such a phenomenon should arouse our awareness on the effects of Internet addiction on students. In order to rectify the situation, all parents including schools, parents and students should face the problem squarely.

No doubt, students of tender age are highly pliable. The online game advertisements shown on the TV draw students' attention and students would like to have a try. There is a high possibility that students may fall into a vicious circle. It is formidable for the students to resist the temptation of games. As students are the future pillars, it is high time to bail them from the plight.

Schools can inculcate the right uses of computers into students. In lower forms, it is compulsory for students to take computer lessons. Teachers may grasp the opportunity to explain the pros and cons of using computer. Within appropriate time, playing computer games or surfing the Internet can release pressure. However, in case of overusing the computers, the harmful effects on both mental and physical health are difficult to estimate. For the mental aspect, students may rely on computers and feel uncomfortable without computers. In addition, they lose interest in sports and academic work. For the physical aspect, using computers in prolonged hours may create tension in the eye. As a result, students might have eye defects, like shortsight or longsight. In worse cases, students may have insomnia because of the fixation on games. This drawback can threaten students in case of overusing the computers. Besides, schools can invite experts to give a talk to the students. With some concrete evidence and real cases, students can have a deeper understanding in the issue.

Apart from schools, parents play an important role in combating Internet addiction as students often use computers at home. Originally, using computers can broaden our horizon and help students keep abreast of social issues. However, students use computers just for joy and leisure. In light of this problem, parents can set rules for using computers at home. It is of utmost importance for the parents to restrict the time for students to use computers. Without a time limit, students easily develop Internet addiction. Also, parents should encourage students to watch news on the Internet rather than playing games only. If students break the rule, parents can reduce their pocket money as a punishment. This can deter students from overusing the Internet.

Not only the aspects mentioned above, students themselves can also deal with the problem. Students should have good self-discipline in using the computer. They should remind themselves of the drawbacks of overusing computers. Furthermore, students should have a strong determination to resist the seduction of computer games. Computer games cost a lot of money and waste time. It seems that overusing the computers is a stumbling block to achieving a good academic result. Also, students should reduce the exposure to games. When students think of the games or Internet, they may develop a great desire in using it. That's why students should learn to be self-disciplined.

All in all, combating Internet addiction is an uphill battle. The battle, although formidable, is surmountable. To remedy the situation, all parties should devise strategies to help teenagers to get rid of the unnecessary evil. Under no circumstances shouldn't we turn a blind eye to the problem. Also, it is our responsibility of the society to prevent the spread of such a phenomenon. Otherwise, there are more and more computer geeks in our society and the trend should be prohibited.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Wong

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