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*Failure to Connect* by Jane M. Healy

According to Jane Healy, "Technology shapes the growing mind. The younger the mind, the malleable it is." (pg. 17) *Failure to Connect* deals with how technology can affect our children's brain and its development. As educators, we need to consider the stages of development and the effect technology has on them. After observing technology uses in many schools around the country, Healy makes some valid points about how technology is implemented in classrooms. Not all technology use in schools today has positive repercussions. Too many educators use technology as a babysitter or for drill and practice. Despite the negative examples, Healy "believes success possible" (pg 22). Using good judgment with choices about computer use in the home and classroom can give success a chance.

It comes down to the choices that educators make about the use of technology. These choices range from time spent using a computer to software content. Too many schools think using drill and practice software that rewards student to be the answer to academic needs. They think that spending multiple sessions weekly will raise standardized test scores. Students are not required to use any higher order thinking skills. Technology

as its best is almost seamlessly integrated into a lesson that meets benchmarks and standards. It is not something that is added to an existing lesson just to have a technology component. Technology should not be used unless it is the appropriate tool for the job. To be successful in the classroom technology needs to take the developmental level and technology abilities into consideration. Healy felt that students didn't need to use computers in the early elementary years because the brain is at a sensitive window of development.

Teachers that are successful with technology in their classroom are typically secure in their role as facilitators, provide project-based learning for their students, and flexible to change, Staff development plays an important role in the educator's success with technology integration.

Parents need to think carefully before purchasing their child a computer. Healy listed guidelines for computer usage. Again it is a matter of choices and limitations. Much like the television and video games, computers are not replacement parents. Computer use needs to be limited, purposeful, and guided. Technology can't take the place of good parenting. Parents need to keep in mind Healy's statement, "If something is harmful to full grown adults, it may carry even greater risk for the developing child, as fast-

growing biological systems are most vulnerable to damage" (pg. 111). Adults can get into trouble with over and abusive use of the Internet. They become compulsive users which like any other obsession can become addictive. Social development is also retarded. Social skills are developed through cooperation and interaction with others not isolation. Children who are allowed open and unchecked access can easily get into trouble and develop habits that will adversely affect their learning styles.

Failure to connect is not the inability to connect one's computer but the affect inappropriate use of technology can have on a child's brain and its development. Through a balance of wise choices made by parents and educators technology can be a positive influence on students.