



education review // reseñas educativas

editors: gene v glass gustavo e. fischman melissa cast-brede

a multi-lingual journal of book reviews

January 27, 2011

ISSN 1094-5296

Education Review/Reseñas Educativas is a project of the National Education Policy Center <http://nepc.colorado.edu>

Follow Education Review on Facebook



Trolley, Barbara C. & Hanel, Constance. (2010). *Cyber Kids, Cyber Bullying, Cyber Balance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin

Pp. 166 ISBN 978- 1412972925

Reviewed by Paul A. Asunda
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

In their book *Cyber Kids, Cyber Bullying, Cyber Balance*, Barbara C. Trolley and Constance Hanel emphasize prevention, assessment, intervention, and evaluation as key steps to guide parents and educators minimize incidents of cyber bullying. The book consists of three parts: “Cyber Kids,” “Cyber Bullying,” and “Cyber Balance.” Each part is composed of three chapters. In part one, Trolley, and Hanel present a picture of contemporary society and technology use and misuse. They state that technology in the 21st century has provided many families with an “electronic babysitter,” and influenced our youth to spend approximately 44 ½ hours using the computer and playing video games. Even though technological advances have vastly improved the daily functioning of most people, one of the major challenges of technological use among youth is that of cyber balance. In

Citation: Asunda, Paul A. (2011 January 27) Review of *Cyber Kids, Cyber Bullying, Cyber Balance* by Barbara C. Trolley & Constance Hanel. *Education Review*, 13. Retrieved [Date] from <http://www.edrev.info/reviews/rev1035.pdf>

part 2, Trolley and Hanel explore different motivation strategies and media used as a vehicle for cyber bullying as well as the different forms the vice takes. They further argue that today's youth are out of balance with regard to proper utilization of technology. Trolley and Hanel state that parents, schools, and the youth have a responsibility to respond to cyber bullying and minimize cyber bullying incidents. Part 3 of the book looks at cyber balance, the authors address ways to restore balance to the use of technology within the family particularly by youth. The book is interspersed with snippets of interesting cyber bullying stories and illustrations, and concludes with appendices offering a variety of reproducibles that include student assessment forms, educational interventions, surveys, and policies that deal with cyber bullying.

The first chapter, "Welcome to my World," sets the tone by helping readers understand how youth perceive technology, how they use technology, and how technology sets the stage for cyber bullying. As youth and technology stay a few steps ahead, parents, educators, and the legal system are racing to keep pace with the new challenges of technology. The authors argue that to understand technological changes, cyber bullying and what it means to be a cyber kid, it is important to understand how technology has blossomed into our daily lives infusing its growth at all levels. The authors reference a document from digitalcenter.org that reported an estimated 79% of Americans spend time online, averaging 13.3 hours a week. Further, Trolley and Hanel stated that one study they looked at revealed that the number of youth who get online jumped from 2 million in 1995 to 77 million in 2005.

In this first chapter the key message the authors want parents and teachers to take home is that we need to understand and agree on the basic premise that technology is moving at a fast pace, and that our youth need to be educated on how to balance this technology within their daily lives. Cyber kids need to have clear, definable boundaries and an action plan to navigate this newfound cyberspace safely.

The second chapter, "Lost in Cyber Space," looks at culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and age, in relation to technology use. Trolley and Hanel believe

that it is important to reflect on how the elimination or reduction of face to face communication, coupled with a shortened or abbreviated language will impact our youth's ability to skillfully communicate with peers, educators, parents or future employers. If youth are not checked and balance measures not put into place, they can easily wander and tune out their surroundings and escape into a private world. Tuning out with electronic devices or handheld gaming units or texting in a broken abbreviated language does nothing to strengthen core communication skills but build a weakness in daily face to face interaction, eye contact skills as well as the ability to read facial cues and interrupt voice inflection in future cyber kid generations. Further, Trolley and Hanel state that today even the most technologically deprived areas or communities that adhere to strict religious or cultural practices are being infiltrated by technological advances. For example, cell phones with cameras were initially banned in 2004 by the Saudi Arabian government due to the potential of invading a woman's privacy and modesty but eventually the ban was revoked. In Iran, the youth have been able to circumvent the regime's rule and regulations expressing their own thoughts and ideas through the use of digital, audio and visual media. We all have the potential to get lost in cyberspace however by embracing the positive aspects as well as acknowledging the potential pitfalls we can better arm our youth as they use technology.

The third chapter, "It is a Small World After All," describes the uses and misuses of technology. Technology has brought about the ability to communicate instantaneously with one another, search for information, play games, make travel arrangements, and search for jobs. In addition, the educational value associated with technology use is endless; long distance learning has made education feasible for many who work full time. However, technology is not without pitfalls. For example, there is a learning curve associated with technology use for new users such as baby boomers, frustrating moments occur when one loses hours of work suddenly and cannot retrieve it. Deteriorating writing skills in our youth from frequent texting, email use, and instant messaging, .Another concern with the amount of texting is the possibility of developing carpal tunnel syndrome, evolution of pedestrians (people who do not pay attention

while walking as they are hooked to their Mp3 players or iPods or busy texting which might lead to some sort of accident).

The fourth chapter, “*Sticks and Stones*,” which introduces Part 2 of the book, presents an overview of cyber bullying. The authors explore cyber bullying and look at how technology has morphed from traditional schoolyard bullying into this new age term. Trolley and Hanel describe cyber bullying to be use of information and communication technologies such as email, cell phones and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal web sites, and online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. It has also been referred to as online social cruelty or electronic bullying. With the growth of Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace, and advanced technological skills, cyber bullying behaviors are becoming more evident in both high school and college age populations. Trolley and Hanel report that cyber bullying occurs among minors and tends to peak later in middle school or high school. Older youth are more likely to be both perpetrators and victims of cyber bullying. However, cyber bullying is not limited to this population; cyber stalking or harassment are labels attached to this behavior between adults, and at least 17 % of teachers have been cyber bullied.

The fifth chapter, “If You Can’t Say Anything Nice,” looks at the vehicles that facilitate cyber bullying. Trolley and Hanel discuss the types of cyber bullies that exist as well as the forms cyber bullying can take. They argue that understanding the different types of cyber bullies will allow better detection of the underlying motivations behind the cyber bullying act. Along with an understanding of the categories or motivations of cyber bullies, recognition of the avenues used to engage in this activity may further aid in detecting the presence of cyber bullying and enable further comprehension of required strategies. It is important that adults in the world of youth know and are aware of the signs of cyber bullying. On pages 38-39, the authors present a table that illustrates cyber bully types and categories with an explanation of each. Trolley and Hanel further explain that cyber bullying may be occurring if for example youth exhibit erratic sleeping patterns such as getting up in the middle of the

night to use the computer. And pages 43 and 44 present a table describing potential warning signs and the different forms that cyber bullying can take. In this chapter, the authors afford parents and teachers an opportunity to better understand the different motivations and media used in the event of cyber bullying.

The sixth chapter, “Houston, We Have a Problem,” provides responses to cyber bullying situations and emphasizes a state of cyber balance. If cyber balance is to be achieved a team approach involving both families and schools must occur. Trolley and Hanel state that the responsibility to respond to cyber bullying involves a team approach from parents, youth, and entire school communities. They summarize these responsibilities in a tabular format to help each group understand how to approach cyber bullying incidents. They posit that the key to cyber balance is education for all, learning to recognize cyber bullying, and having a support program that will minimize incidents in place will be imperative in addressing growing boundaries of cyber bullying.

The seventh chapter, “What’s up, Doc?” addresses the issue of technology assessment. Trolley and Hanel argue that in order to restore cyber balance to technology use, it is crucial that a cyber bullying assessment be done not only within the family but also at the school and community levels. In order to achieve cyber balance, many steps must be taken to assist today’s youth. One of these steps is to assess school districts as well as specific schools cyber bullying programs and putting in place assessment guidelines. Assessment is crucial not only for protecting the victim but also for helping the perpetrator. In this way, not only are future incidents of cyber bullying perhaps prevented but also equilibrium is restored in technology use. From a family assessment perspective it is Trolley and Hanel’s view that parents need to take stock of the whole family technology use and ask themselves if it is balanced in relation to their family life. According to Trolley and Hanel, parents should set limits on when, where, and how children can use technology, and give them a plan to use if they think they have been cyber bullied. Further, they provide a chart that outlines some guidelines for assessing one’s use of technology and whether or not one is out of balance. The chart is divided into two columns, one column depicts characteristics that

one portrays when out of balance and the other illustrates attributes that one is in balance.

The eighth chapter, “This One is Just Right,” looks at strategies that seek to address misuses such as cyber bullying and can restore a healthy use of technology by the youth. Trolley and Hanel state that to date, most programs like “zero tolerance,” “3 Strikes and You’re Out,” etc. are not effective and have been aimed at the student/s who are the perpetrators with the focus being disciplinary in nature. They suggest the PEAS (Psychological, Educational, and Social responses) program they developed based on the best practice premises. The three aspects of the program (psychological, educational and social) overlap and should be addressed simultaneously to meet the needs of all the parties affected by cyber bullying. In addition, Trolley and Hanel offer the following pointers when considering developing cyber-bullying interventions:

- Assessment of the cyber bully and situation is essential
- Nuances associated with online communication must be evaluated fully
- Cyber bullying may involve a community of students interfacing with one another not just isolated one to one situations.
- Focus needs to move beyond the individual student to the school environment and larger community
- Efforts must be made to engage all students and the larger community
- Disciplinary responses alone are not sufficient
- Attention needs to move beyond the pathology to skill building for example social skills, problem solving skills, and interventions based on cognitive-behavioral and empathy models
- Programs that involve students in constructive projects outside of school are important
- Helping the cyber bully has a domino effect in preventing further victimization
- Assessment and therapeutic responses are a team effort, not the sole responsibility of one school staff member
- Efforts must be proactive, not just reactive (pp. 73-74)

The last chapter, “An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure,” addresses the issue of prevention. Trolley

and Hanel describe our roles as parents and educators in initiating cyber balance. They state just as we are accustomed to teaching our children about stranger danger and fire safety drills we must now add the proper use of technology on the list. Sending children and young adults into cyberspace without rules is like sending them to school with no set expectations of behavior. The authors state that parents are their children's first teachers and therefore must be prepared to proactively address technology use. To this end, Trolley and Hanel offer the following guidelines that families and schools can follow to achieve cyber balance: (a) decide ahead of time a family plan concerning technology use e.g. where computer will be placed at your home, (b) teach youth to accept ownership of actions when using technology, and (c) help youth understand the powers at hand when using technologically supported products. Trolley and Hanel state that too much of a good thing can throw things out of balance. Although technology provides numerous conveniences, it is imperative to balance one's time with alternative activities that promote physical exertion and interaction with peers. In closing this chapter, Trolley and Hanel stress that technology use is an indirect form of contact and interaction with society. A healthy balance of direct interaction with peers and physical activities promotes good social skills, problem solving abilities and physical fitness.

With the rapid growth of technology, increased integration into academic and vocational work, escalated marketing in the media, the increase in the number of youth who lack social skills and increased family demands, it will not be surprising to see fewer youth who are cyber balanced. Therefore, *Cyber Kids*, *Cyber Bullying*, *Cyber Balance* is a practical proactive guide for parents, counselors, and educators that offers insightful suggestions for helping our children make informed and balanced choices that lead to proper use of technology as well as reducing incidents of cyber bullying and realizing a cyber balanced society. The book is organized in an easy-to-read format and is interspersed with vignettes of cyber story illustrations in addition to graphical and illustrative strategies presented in tables that emphasize as well as offer suggestions of how to combat incidents of cyber imbalance. The book concludes with a variety of resources that can be reproduced in the appendices e.g. legal guidelines related

to student online speech, internet safety agreement, cyber bullying program worksheet, educational interventions, cyber bullying educational resource guide, cyber youth survey, counselor/school resource chart, parent resource chart etc. I concur with Trolley and Hanel that prevention primarily through education and process communication as well as therapeutic intervention is essential to achieve the proper use of technology in our lives.

About the reviewer

Paul A. Asunda, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the College of Education and Human Services, Department of Workforce Education and Development at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Paul's research interests include STEM education and teacher preparation in workforce education, technical literacy, new technologies, and strategies for preparing teachers to integrate and disseminate these technologies in the curriculum.

Copyright is retained by the first or sole author, who grants right of first publication to the *Education Review*.

Education Review/Reseñas Educativas is a project of the National Education Policy Center <http://nepc.colorado.edu>



Editors

Gene V Glass

glass@edrev.info

Gustavo Fischman

fischman@edrev.info

Melissa Cast-Brede

cast-brede@edrev.info
