

EDITORIAL

A PROVOKING THOUGHT: SMARTPHONES AS EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

The invasion of smartphones at school is taking its toll on education. According to a study published in the online January 2016 issue of the Journal of Media Education, College students in American Universities spend more class time than ever playing with their smartphones. Students who participated in the study estimated that, on average, they spent 20 percent of their classroom time using digital devices for activities unrelated to class – whether it be text messaging, checking social media and even playing games. And the phenomenon is going global.

However, while most faculty are getting tired of battling the use of smartphones in class, some educators are disengaging from the battle by engaging students in lessons that integrate these powerful gadgets. As the old saying goes, if you can't beat them, you may as well join them.

Thus, the question that arises is whether it makes sense to fight the proliferation of technology in the classroom when tech gadgets have so much educational value as some researchers claim.

Examples of the strategies to unlock the power of smartphones as educational devices are on the rise. Software is now available that allows you to collaborate with all the smart devices in your class, which can fit very well within the paradigm of student centered education, in which learning strategies such as collaborative work, problem solving, and inquiry are crucial.

Smartphones, supported by a strong classroom management system, can be very handy tools for both individual and collaborative learning in and outside the classroom walls. They can also be valuable measuring and imaging devices for science instruction and research in the lab and out in the field.

In a broad sense, Higher Education Institutions around the globe face the challenge of integrating e-learning and now m-learning strategies in their formation policies. For better or worse, mobile-based technologies are here to stay and they have the potential to change the concept of university the way we know it.

Thanks for reading.

Best regards,

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