

Mobile Phones in the Classroom

Description: Musical introduction with OTAN, Outreach and Technical Assistance Network logo shown.

Description: Sean C. Abajian has brown hair and a brown goatee. He is wearing a striped shirt with an olive green blazer. His interview takes place in a classroom with a bookshelf behind him. A video clip of Sean C. Abajian is shown. Sean is talking to an audience and holding a cell phone in his hand.

Sean C. Abajian, Teacher Adviser at Jefferson Community Adult School: Mobile learning to me is when you're able to learn anytime, anywhere and so that's what I've been trying to provide for my students.

Description: Jose Lopez-Mercedes is wearing a black suit with a blue tie. He has short brown hair. His interview takes place in a classroom with books on a bookshelf behind him. While Jose talks, a video of a female student using a cell phone in a classroom is played.

Jose Lopez-Mercedes, ESL Teacher, Santa Ana College: Mobile learning means that students have access to a cell phone, or any device which can be used for students to learn a second language or any subject. And it's something that is accessible twenty-four, seven. Students have them with them all the time.

Description: Sean's interview continues in his classroom. While he speaks 2 video clips are played of students in a classroom discussing, comparing and using cell phones.

Sean: Ninety percent of our students have cell phones and 100% expressed interest in using activities through cell phones...even if they don't have a cell phone yet. I think it's important that we break the digital divide that exists for folks who may not be able to afford a computer with an Internet connection at home, and to be able to provide them materials with resources that they already have.

Description: Ann Marie Holzkecht is interviewed. She is wearing a brown dress and a brown beaded necklace. She has shorter brown hair and wears eye glasses. During her interview a video is shown of her doing a cell phone activity with students.

Ann Marie Holzkecht, ESL Professor, San Diego Community College District: And I just decided, you know, I'm gonna keep it simple. I want to use the phone for texting, for taking pictures, and for calling. Because, when I do a needs assessment, the number one thing students want...they want more listening and speaking.

Description: Jose's interview continues while a video is shown of him walking around a classroom giving instruction to students. Students are shown using cell phones.

Jose: Students really like texting. I usually send a text, and I get instant feedback from the students. But if I actually give them an assignment, like for instance, to leave a voice mail, they actually take longer for them to do that activity.

Some of the activities I have used, integrating cell phones in the classrooms, include texting, dictation, recording audio voice to a Voki, and interviewing a partner using Google Voice or using their cell phone. When we use texting inside the classroom I have them work in groups. And they will have a reporter, which is actually going to be able to provide answers, and most of the times there are two or three students in a group that have a cell phone.

Voki is an online tool that is provided for educators, it's free, and what students use this for is they are given a phone number with a code to record the voice mail or the assignment that they are just given by the instructor. I provide them with the feedback after this Voki is created with the voice. The final product can be embedded into the course Web site for other students to comment on each other's Voki.

Description: Jose is shown giving instruction to his class. Jose is at the front of the classroom next to a smart board. As he gives instructions, students are seated at their desks taking notes.

Jose: You are going to interview a partner, and if you have a cell phone, do the same thing, record the phone call. Right? So you're going to call the teacher, right? And you're going to leave a voice mail, with an interview.

Description: While Ann continues her interview, a video is shown of a female student entering data from a piece of paper into her cell phone.

Ann: And the great thing for me is when I'd see their text or listen to their English I could pull out the grammar, I could see where they're making mistakes, authentic mistakes. You know, sometimes when students have a grammar worksheet it's pretty easy to figure out, "is, are, is, are," and... and they're not really challenged. But when they have to text the message, or they have to say something, it changes their experience. And it really shows me, really what they have mastered or what they need to review.

Description: While Sean speaks a video is played of him giving instruction to his students. Sean is holding a cell phone up towards his chest while he speaks to the class. One male student is actively using his cell phone while Sean gives instruction.

Sean: Another activity that we've developed is that students will be able to listen to a conversation that we've gone over in class. So they recognize the conversation. I've recorded it with someone else, and the students are able to hear two distinct voices practicing this conversation that they're already familiar with.

Description: Jose distributes papers to students who are sitting in small groups. A female student is shown standing with her cell phone in hand.

Jose: An activity, for example, filling in the blanks. They will be in small groups, and some of them will have cell phones. And they will provide answers to the instructor. I can provide them with feedback on spelling or grammar/punctuation.

Description: While Ann Marie, Jose and Sean speak, video clips are shown of students interacting with cell phones in classroom settings.

Ann: I've noticed that the students are engaged and they're working with each other and like "no, no, no, that's not right," and...and making different students, even students who don't text normally...they're teaching their peers and they have to speak English to say what letters and how to spell it, so they're working together.

Jose: I think this is a great way to connect with students, and also for them to interact with each other, and for the instructors to, the teachers to get to know the students.

Ann: When you go into the classroom and you're willing to use a little technology, you have to be willing to say, [laughing] "sometimes things aren't gonna work out the way you want them to."

Jose: You have to try it until it actually works. So never give up. If you actually find something new, always try to identify students that are computer savvy and they might be able to help you as well.

Sean: The outcomes that we're seeing from the use of this cell phone technology are that the students are improving their English skills, because they're able to practice what we're learning in class, uh... additionally.

One student mentioned to me that they were particularly excited about using this technology because now, while they're waiting for the bus they can actually practice their English.

Description: Henry Lopez is a Latino male. He is wearing a blue t-shirt with a black t-shirt under it. He has short black hair.

Henry Lopez, ESL Learner: In my job, if I have a little time, of during my lunch time or my break time, I like to learn because I think it is another way for you for review, and I am... I want to speak English, I want to learn English.

Description: Agustin Estrada is also a Latino male. He has short black hair and brown eyes. He is wearing a dark green collared shirt.

Agustin Estrada, ESL Learner: I think that to use cell phone to practice English in the live practice is very, very necessary in these times.

Description: Jose is shown completing his interview and a video is shown of a female student smiling while using her cell phone.

Jose: The final result, it's really rewarding because the students are able to produce something - use their English that they're using in the classroom and actually putting it into practice.

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