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PowerPoint Slides

Is There a Solution to Students Multitasking in Class?

Presented by:
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Presenter Bios:

Maryellen Weimer, Ph.D., has edited *The Teaching Professor* newsletter since 1987 and writes the *Teaching Professor* blog at *www.teachingprofessor.com*. She is a professor emerita of Teaching and Learning at Penn State Berks. Dr. Weimer has consulted with over 300 colleges and universities on instructional issues and regularly keynotes national meetings and regional conferences. She has published many books, including: *Inspired College Teaching: A Career-Long Resource for Professional Growth* (Jossey-Bass, 2010), *Enhancing Scholarly Work on Teaching and Learning: Professional Literature that Makes a Difference* (Jossey-Bass, 2006), *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice* (Jossey-Bass, 2002).

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Is There a Solution to Students Multitasking in Class?

By Maryellen Weimer
Editor of *The Teaching Professor*

"Digital natives"

Grown up with technology

Popular belief: Cognitive capacities have changed

Digital natives say they can:

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Students can't multitask
when they're trying to learn

Learning isn't like a lot of other activities

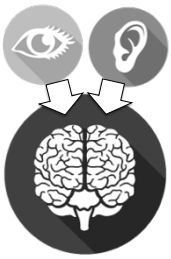
Learning requires sophisticated mental processing

Think of human processing as having two separate channels

- Auditory/verbal
- Visual/pictorial

Clayson and Haley

- Both organize information
- Only separate in the beginning
- Each must be integrated into:
  - What needs immediate action
  - What needs to be stored in memory



Each channel has limited capacity.

Learning requires a lot of cognitive processing in both channels.

Evidence that learning tasks suffer

Research is impressive

When student multitask in class or while studying, their grades go down.

In some cases a full letter grade lower.

Kuznekoff and Titsworth

Students think they can multitask

94% say they receive texts in class

86% say they send texts in class

56% say their instructor banned texting

49% say they texted anyway

Clayson and Haley

47% say they could follow a lecture and text.
47% say texting during class did not influence their grades.
32% say they can text without the instructor knowing.
>50% know texting makes it hard to follow a lecture.
>50% know it affects their grades.
61% say they didn't think they should text during class.

How do you get students to stop?

Is there a solution that works?

1. Forbid it. Have a policy & enforce it.

- Difficult to enforce without constant surveillance.
- Vigilant enforcement has costs.

If teacher monitors, it distracts teacher as much as technology distracts students.

2. Use technology for course-related purposes

- Challenge students to use devices to find answers
- Use cell phones like clickers
- Have a class Twitter feed
- Look at online resources

2. Use technology for course-related purposes

- This is a partial solution
- Will students do what their teacher asked?
- You may create multitasking compromises when you ask students to look at a website.

3. Let students decide

- Make problems with multitasking known.
- Confront students with the evidence. Let them discover it with an activity.
  - Have students trade notes
  - Are the main points in the notes?

On "making" students stop using devices

- Think about the climate for learning in that course.
- Students need to decide for themselves after considering the consequences.

  What tech. behaviors get in the way of learning?

  Help them make the right decision.

Some behaviors may impact other students

- Use a quick anonymous survey to identify distracting behaviors.
- Agree as a class to avoid behavior that others find distracting.

Code of conduct for the classroom

Learning is a special activity – interesting and sometimes life-changing.

- It merits our full, undivided attention.
- "Lids down, hands up" rule for difficult problem or important concept.

Conclusion

This is a problem without a perfect solution.

- Consider these options.
- Talk with colleagues and students.
- Use devices as aids only when they support the learning task – not other tasks.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/multitask