

## 5 Reasons Technology Should Be Allowed in the Classroom

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Letting students use their devices in class can personalize and improve the educational experience in many ways.

The use of personal technology devices in the classroom is prevalent at colleges and universities. Rather than embracing this trend, some faculty, departments, and even entire institutions have started putting limitations on students' use of personal technology in class.

I have experienced this firsthand in multiple classes at my own university. It started with teachers asking students to put away their mobile phones; now instructors are asking us to keep our laptops closed for the duration of class. The reasons behind these limitations typically have been concerns about students' attention spans: a desire to prevent multitasking, keep them off of social media sites and limit distractions to others.

While it is inevitable that students will be distracted at times, putting constraints on the use of personal technology devices will not solve this problem. Restricting use of devices in the classroom is moving away from the trend of improving education by integrating technology. Here are five reasons why educational institutions should continue on that path instead of stepping back.

**1. Students are technology natives.** Using technology is second nature to students. They have grown up with it and incorporate it into almost every aspect of their lives. Notebooks, tablets, and cellphones are all technology that students are accustomed to and can use as ancillary learning aids. They should not lose access to potential learning tools that have known benefits in a classroom.

**2. Students use e-books.** Many students are purchasing digital editions of textbooks instead of traditional printed copies for a variety of reasons, including cost efficiency, ease of accessibility, and environmental friendliness. E-books are typically accessed through a student's personal device, such as a notebook, tablet, or cellphone. Students should have access to them to look up information during class. Students want streamlined organization. Personal technology devices have a range of features that can aid students with organization, such as note-taking applications, calendars, and virtual sticky notes. These help students stay more organized by keeping all of their information centralized and connected between devices. Users can find what works for them and tailor their devices to help them perform more effectively.

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**4. Students need access to supplemental information.** Mobile devices give students Internet access. Although it can be used inappropriately by some (such as to check Facebook or Twitter), students often use the Net to find more information about a topic being discussed in class. Not only can students use their personal devices to find extra data on their own, but also professors can provide additional information that is easily accessible to their students.

**5. Students can prepare for work in the field.** At the higher-education level, many students participate in field work as part of their specific areas of study. Much of this work requires the use of technology. For example, graphic design students may work on real projects that require relevant applications that are accessed through their personal devices. Learning how to use these apps in the classroom allows students will prepare them for using them outside of it.