Electronic devices bad for students in class

Aldemaro Romero Jr.
CUNY Bernard M Baruch College

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One of the most striking behavioral shifts we have observed in college classrooms over the last few years is the pervasive use of electronic devices by students during class. Whether using their cell phones, tablets, or laptops, more and more students appear intent on their devices. They check social media, read their email, play video games, do homework for other classes, and even— at least I have it on good authority — watch pornographic material while the professor keeps lecturing.

Many of us find these behaviors alarming not only because they distract the students who are on their devices from the objectives of the classroom experience, such as being engaged in the subject matter, but also because they distract other students who are trying to attend to the purposes of the class itself. Students do not seem to care much about how many of their classmates may be selling their attention. They simply go on doing what they want to do. Because the internet is more important to them than getting an education for which they are paying.

Now a new study published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Center for Economic Research substantiates the fear that electronic devices are actively affecting student performance.

“Letters from Academia

Professors

Usage on Academic Performance,” professors from the United States military academy found that the average final exam scores among students assigned to classrooms that allowed computers were 15 percent lower than exam scores of students in classrooms that prohibited those devices. The study also showed that males are more negatively affected than females by the use of these devices in the classroom and that they affect people equally at all ranks.

As the study, published this month, was conducted among students attending the West Point military academy, the results are not necessarily applicable to other classroom settings.

The study concludes that the use of electronic devices “destroys a student’s attention away from the class, resulting in a lower understanding of the material.” Also, according to the study, students are not as effective at taking notes when using electronic devices, which are required to use pen and paper, which, in turn, could also lower test scores. The message sent to clear students perform worse when personal electronic-related technology is available in the classroom.

This advantage is true even when students are allowed to keep their tablets flat on the desk. What matters is that most tablet computers come with a mobile device operating system, which allows for closed access to web applications, the same web applications that are available on desktop computers. Even if students are told that professors are able to monitor usage, students have a greater propensity to access distracting websites and applications via the tablet computer than with a laptop computer.

The report says that while students may have used regular computers, in secondary-school class settings, tablets are a relatively new technology for them, as well as for their instructors, and they would not be able to serve as a tool. Thus, the problem is more serious than it may seem. Not only is the presence of these devices hurting the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational technology provided by colleges. Many colleges rank high as a place where students can have a meaningful relationship, sharing about the performance in graduating students on time.

The Rock Island Argus

Zach Fouchter/Intelligencer

Highlights from the annual Yom Hashoah Holocaust Memorial Program held Thursday, May 12, 2016 at Beth Israel and Tri-City Jewish Center.

Two students carry a beachball using nothing but their faces during an event at Leclaire Elementary School’s annual Ocean Day on May 11.

Walter Haupt said there is no need to rush to get the new identification cards.

Notable features of the cards to enhance security are a “ghost” photo of the person that will be used only for people to hold a driver’s license and a state ID number, respectively, instead of the traditional picture and signature. The day he left the hospital, his mother said, it was the greatest birthday ever for her
dughter, learning a new language, and how to understand the contours of the region. The day he left the hospital, his mother said, it was the greatest birthday ever for her daughter, learning a new language, and how to understand the contours of the region. The day he left the hospital, his mother said, it was the greatest birthday ever for her daughter, learning a new language, and how to understand the contours of the region. The day he left the hospital, his mother said, it was the greatest birthday ever for her daughter, learning a new language, and how to understand the contours of the region.

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