

# Leveraging Student Devices to Increase Engagement

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- Rationales
  - Student Devices in the Classroom
    - If you can't beat 'em...
      - We know they're bringing them. We know they're finding ways to use them. Sometimes being told it's ok to have the forbidden fruit makes it just a bit less enticing. Plus, if it's out in the open, you can keep an eye on it.
    - Look at them as a force multiplier.
      - To put it into perspective, for those of us who grew up in the 80's and 90's, in order to walk into a classroom with most of the tools that our students have at their fingertips, we would have needed to arrive like this guy. So our students walk into our rooms with: a computer with internet access, email, a camera, a movie camera, a music library, an atlas, a video-conferencing device, a scientific calculator, a compass and gps device, and this just includes the basic tools pre-installed on a smartphone. So they walk in with all of this, which would have cost us, back in the day, thousands of dollars, and what is the first thing we want them to do? Put it away. If we stop thinking of smartphones as scary/threatening, just think of what you might be able to accomplish by harnessing them for your own purposes. We do not work in a district in which one-to-one, district funded computing is likely to be a reality in the near future. But, by integrating student owned devices, it becomes a real possibility in your classroom.
    - It's just one more tool.
      - Twenty years ago, good, effective teachers weren't using a single tool to teach every day all year long. Those teachers would have thought you were crazy if you said you should teach everything using only a filmstrip projector, or an overhead, or a worksheet, or a television, or a chalkboard, or a textbook, or... Student devices can be one more thing to add to your instructional tools. That doesn't mean you need to use it all period, or even every period, but could there be times when it would come in handy during instruction?
        - On a related note, a group of us from Malone recently saw a presentation by Marcia Tate, an educator who draws from a field of brain research to suggest how we can change the way we teach to be brain-compatible. In her books and presentations, she outlines 20 strategies to take advantage of the way the brain



works to better ensure that learning takes place. Now, I'm not saying that student devices are the magic bullet of brain-based learning, but looking at this list, can you think of some things you could do with student devices that would hit on some of these strategies? They are:

- writing
- storytelling
- mnemonic devices
- visuals
- movement
- roleplaying
- visualization
- metaphor/analogy/simile
- reciprocal teaching/cooperative learning
- music
- graphic organizers
- drawing
- humor
- discussion
- games
- project-based instruction
- field trips
- manipulatives
- technology
- work-study'
- Ruben Puentedura has described the levels of technology integration in instruction with his SAMR (substitution, augmentation, modification, and redefinition) model. (Go to [mrdalton.org/professional-development](http://mrdalton.org/professional-development) to download the his pdf of examples.)
  - The acronym stands for:
    - Substitution = Tech acts as a direct tool substitute with no functional change.
    - Augmentation = Tech acts as a direct tool substitute, with functional improvement.
    - Modification = Tech allows for significant task redesign.
    - Redefinition = Tech allows for the creation of new tasks, previously inconceivable.
  - The first two levels he describes as enhancement, and the argument can certainly be made at these levels that moving from tried and true methods to add technology like a smartphone simply to add the technology doesn't make sense. It probably isn't worth the payoff.
  - But the next two levels he describes as transformation. Here you aren't simply using a "gadget" to do something you could do with the low-tech tools that are readily to hand.
- Blended Learning
  - Extending the learning environment beyond the classroom.
    - In this model, learning is not delineated by a bell schedule.

- Preparing students for their future realities.
  - We are living through the most rapid era of technological change in human history. We cannot prepare them for their *College and Careers* in the same way we were prepared for ours.
- It can save you time!
  - Yes, there is time expenditure involved in the set up, but depending on the online environment you're using, it can save you time in future preparation, grading, etc.
- They said they want evidence, right?
  - Most of the major online learning spaces will collect and analyze a whole host of information for you about your students and their performance through the year.
- Concerns with Smartphones in Class
  - Won't they just be texting and using Facebook?
    - Maybe. But then again, just because a student is writing in his/her notebook, how do you know, from the front of the room, that it isn't a letter to a significant other that is being penned?
    - Teach them. Why do we assume that they should understand why we don't want them texting during class? Ask them how many years of their lives texting has been a part of. Texting is so second nature as a form of communication to them, that asking them not to often seems arbitrary and nonsensical. I'm not at all saying I'm in favor of letting them text during class. I'm saying I'm in favor of educating them as to why I want their undivided attention on what's going on in my room. Then again, how many adults have you sat across from in meetings, or at a dinner table, only to have them start using their phones in mid-sentence?
      - You could actually turn this into a class activity. Work with them to come up with a few guidelines for acceptable use in your classroom. You could even use one of the tools below in the process.
    - Move around. If you have them looking for information, walk around and ask them to show you what they're using to find the information. This doesn't have to be done in a confrontational way; I'm always asking my students because sometimes they know of better sites/apps than I do, or because I know of one better than theirs and can point them in a new direction.
    - Keep them in the open. If we're going to be using our phones, I have them put them on their desks, face down until it's time for us to use them. I have found that more often than not, if they're out in the open, my students seem to have less urge to be dividing their attention and surreptitiously looking at them.
  - Not every student has one.
    - You're right. You'll probably be surprised by just how few of them don't, but you are right, some of them won't. So, don't design activities that absolutely require that each student have one. Either set things up so you can pair students up, or provide alternatives.
  - How do I Integrate them in a meaningful way?
    - Hopefully the discussion in this workshop and the (small) selection of tools below will give you some starting points.
    - Start small. Rome wasn't built in a day, and your classroom didn't become a digital Shangri-La in a day either. Try one thing. Expect it to not work perfectly the first time, and realize that that's ok.
    - Talk to your students about how to use them. First of all, they quite possibly have experience with this in other classes already, so why reinvent the wheel? But you can also use this as an opportunity to get them to have more of a feeling of ownership and investment in their own education.

- Some Tools
  - Smartphone
    - [todaysmeet.com](http://todaysmeet.com) (internet)
      - No account needed.
      - Use this for a “backchannel.”
      - Create a name for your room, ask a question, choose how long to keep the room open (shorter usually = better) and then direct students to your room.
        - The address will be [todaysmeet.com/whateveryounamedyourroom](http://todaysmeet.com/whateveryounamedyourroom).
      - Try it:
        - [todaysmeet.com/malonedevices](http://todaysmeet.com/malonedevices)
    - [Remind101](http://Remind101.com) (internet for setup, text messaging)
      - Requires a free teacher account.
      - Use the service to send text messages to students and/or parents without actually ever knowing their phone numbers. Messages go out to entire classes, not to individuals.
        - Use it to remind students of assignments/assessments, or inform parents of them.
    - [polleverywhere.com](http://polleverywhere.com) (internet and text messaging)
      - Requires a free account (make sure you check the box that you’re an educator for extra features).
      - This lets you create poll questions to get live feedback from the students (or whoever you’re talking to).
      - Polls can be answered via text message or online via your [PollEv.com](http://PollEv.com) page
        - [PollEv.com/mdalton](http://PollEv.com/mdalton)
    - [StudyBlue.com](http://StudyBlue.com) (internet ,iOS app, Android app)
      - Requires a free account for both teacher and students.
      - Create (very easily) study materials for your classes which your students can then access via the app.
    - [Socrative.com](http://Socrative.com)
      - Requires a free teacher account.
      - Direct students to [m.socrative.com](http://m.socrative.com) and provide them with the room number you were given when you created your question.
        - 414069
    - [qrstuff.com](http://qrstuff.com)
      - No account needed.
      - Generate QR codes which can be read by any of dozens and dozens of free qr code readers.



- - Check out the website to see all of the things that a QR code can point at and think of the possibilities.

- Blended Learning
  - edmodo.com
  - CollaborizeClassroom.com
  - Moodle (<http://www2.malonecsd.org/moodle/>)
  - schoology.com