Using SmartPhones In The Classroom

School administrators frequently lament their lack of funding to purchase enough computers for their classrooms. Almost everyone agrees that the use of technology in a classroom helps students to be more successful. The sad truth may be that school administrators have outlawed the very items that could bring success to their schools.

Students, of all ages, carry around small computers everywhere they go. Look for any teenager. It is almost inevitable that a SmartPhone will be attached to their hand. Many schools have outlawed these devices. The school administrators and instructors are afraid the students will use the devices to send notes or cheat during class. Meanwhile, students keep the outlawed devices in their pockets. They continue to send those texts and helps to each other without raising any suspicions from the instructor.

If school administrators feel a need to police the use of these devices, they would be more successful by having students keep the devices on their desk, at all times. The instructors would be much more likely to notice their use, if they were not kept deep within the students’ pockets.

There are many ways that SmartPhones could be used in the classroom. Simple web searches are readily available. The teacher could model correct searching methods on a digital whiteboard, then allow the students to conduct their own searches. This allows students to connect with the vast amount of resources that are available.

Several web applications exist that allow the creation of online polls. Instructors can create these polls and have students respond to them, during the class. This allows students to quickly see how the material relates to their class. Many of these polls can be answered by a text message, eliminating the need for an actual SmartPhone.

Twitter hashtags would allow instructors to allow ongoing student discussion during class. This discussion would not interrupt the instruction. Instead, it would allow students to become active participants during the instruction. The instructor would create a hashtag for the class. During the class, students send Tweets, using that hashtag. They can respond to each other as they listen to the instructor. The instructor can also monitor the hashtag and adjust the discussion, if interesting comments or questions arise.

There are many valid reasons for allowing students to use their SmartPhones in the classroom. By outlawing these devices, school administrators are not utilizing the resources that are readily available to them.