

# Use of Cell phones in Classroom Teaching: Boon or Bane

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## Abstract:

*There is always a debate amongst educationists about students being allowed to bring cell phones in classrooms. But recent studies and my own exposure to Oxford make me think about this issue. ELT also need a lot of technological upheaval and I think use of cell phones can make it fruitful and interesting. The present study is a suggestion to use of cell phone in classroom. It tells why it is important to change our mind set and our traditional pattern of teaching. Students mind is accustomed of technology; they can easily adapt lessons given to them with the help of technology. So, paper deals with the uses of cell phone and also suggests ways of using cell phone in classroom teaching with a hawk's eye on students.*

## Keywords:

Apps, technology, Smartphones, Android, Vocabulary.

## Introduction

Someone asked “**why to climb Mount Everest?**” and Mallory replied, “**Because it is there?**” Same is the case with the use of technology and devices like I Pad and Mobile in classroom teaching. The above said term indicate the idea about the use of technology. When we have so many new advancements and their optimal uses, why not to be user friendly and make these tools for better learning. These days Mobiles have become an integral part of life. Nearly every student keeps mobile even if it is not allowed in the campus. In that case, why we teachers can't make it an effective mode of teaching English? Teachers of English as a foreign language face many problems in classrooms when we talk about India. Large class sizes, traditional equipment, no or less technological support and students' attitude towards learning L<sub>2</sub> always make a teacher apathetic.

## Use of Net devices for ELT:

Recently I got an opportunity to go to Oxford University for a summer

seminar on ELT for 15 days. There I saw a great use of technology along with Mobile as one of the major aid. This Idea really fascinated me a lot. In India, everybody is using Mobile with Net facility but not for constructive purpose. It is only for social Networking sites, messaging and staying connected with family and friends. English language Teaching is not a traditional teaching now a days. It has many innovations and computer can be a great aid of teaching. But advent of Android mobile phones has made a revolutionary effect in technology advancement. Mobile phones are social tools which can facilitate communication and collaborations among other learners. Students can access dictionary for vocabulary very easily in classroom where normally they don't bring Dictionaries always. A great advantage is self-discipline and self-regulated studies. The major uses of Mobile phones in English language Teaching and classes is:-

### Cell Phone's use in ELT:

- **Recording** – facility allow students to record teacher's lecture. They can again study lectures as many times as they want in their homes to understand and learn it.
- **Photography** – Pictorial memory always work well. Students can

take picture through mobile and keep them for their memory.

- **Stay connected** – There are many social networking sites where teacher can make groups with their students and discuss things outside the class and give and share informations, notes, pictures, ideas and discuss their problems too.
- **Academic Growth**-There are many apps which can be downloaded for academic growth. As pronunciation apps, Evernot and many others. Dictionary and thesaurus apps are really worth taking.
- **Connection with peer group**-Communication among peer group and with teachers has become easier and accessible all the time.

All these activities ask us to allow our students to bring their smart phones in class rooms. There is a term BYOD (Being Your Own Device) which is commonly spreading amongst the students. It says that all the students should bring their own devices. But when we take about Indian circumstances not any student can afford a smartphones or android phone. In that case sometimes teachers have to play smart. He should instruct class to do activities and

learning either in pairs or in groups. This will bridge the gap of BYOD.

## Is it really good to use cell phones for teaching?

Using cell phones in class as a tool is always a debatable issue. When I find so many apps and links which can be used as a tool of teaching and improving student's ability, I share this with my college authorities, as bringing cell-phones is strictly banned in my college. It was really not easy to satisfy Management and Principal as cell phones have created havoc in campus already. But when students were surveyed and they have been informed with the pros of cell phone teaching, they readily accepted not to use it other than studies. They pay more attention now when teacher teach them.

### Major Hurdles in Use:

Cell phones are different from computers and laptops. In a computer lab, you can access many things but they are not your own. You have to share them, show them. But your cell-phone is your own device in which you can navigate and explore whatever you want. Sitting at one place reading, searching, listening becomes dull and boring sometimes but cell phone allows you to access and see

things in different locations even after the class. There are some constrains of the cell phones also:-

- It is really easy to say that every student should have Android phone. But students coming from BPL families or EWS cannot afford these devices. Teacher can connect them with others having similar phones but that can only be possible in class rooms only.
- Problems of Network, connectivity, speed and other technological issues some time distract the discipline of the class. Similarly student start their texting, messaging and all this break the discipline of the classroom completely.
- Some students don't want to share their devices with others. When they have been asked to share their device with others, they become reluctant.
- Students use cell phones for wrong or illegal activities. Girl students use them for some friendships and other things which sometimes become problems for Administration and parents also. Some students

create social issues and problems as hierarchy.

## Some Suggestions for Cell phone's use:

There are some suggested ways which can be used to have a great use of mobile phones in ELT:-

- Students can communicate with peer group and teachers using smart phones and share Audio, Videos and useful Apps.
- YouTube, Twitter, Google and many other useful websites can be used to get videos of lessons and topics. YouTube is full of videos on each topic students need to explore.
- Google translate can be used in phone for language barrier and hesitation. Students can read and learn famous works and books of other languages also.
- Dictionary and Thesaurus apps will really give a lot of help all the time.
- There are many websites, apps which help youngsters to enrol themselves as a writer. They check your work give suggestions, corrections and also help to improve and write flawlessly.
- Share notes, pictures and other writings with the help of Google Drive in cell phone.
- Students can use calculator, memo and Reminder, Timers, stop watches and other things for classroom activities.
- Can write and share them with peer group with the help of cell phone Novels.
- Can share their Homework note instantly with their parents.
- Recording facility has so many advantages. Students can listen as and when required and check their own pronunciation too.
- There are apps and programmes where teachers can form a group with their students and their parents can also made members. In this group teachers can share Homework, class work, and give their reviews and feedback.
- For Teachers, It will be easier to give their notes with the help of cell phone's feature Drop box and Evernote.

## How to overcome with the Tec phobia:

There have been advantages of cell phones using in class rooms. But some teachers and parents feel that these gadgets should

not be allowed in the class room. I was also strongly against bringing mobile in class room. But when I come to know about “Adrian’s Pron chart” by Macmillan I was really overwhelmed. It’s an app which is the crux of pronunciation. I suddenly changed my opinion completely. Now I believed that these gadgets not only help students to learn faster and better but also help teachers to make students understand all they want to share with their students. Although it sometimes creates a lot of distraction but still if we the teachers believe our students they will also not breach our trust. Once I read somewhere that a US based 21 year old girl wrote a novel with the help of her cell phone as she use to type text whenever she gets time and in the period of 7 months she has a full 142 pages novel in the form of a love story of teenagers. So, in this way cell phone can be a good learning and reading tool.

So, to ban cell phones from class rooms is not a rescue. Students use to make mischief with copy and pen too, we have not banned them. So, when we want to save environment by saving papers, why not to cell phone as a great tool and device but with some attention, care and trick. A Teacher has to be techno savvy using device for students in classroom but he has to keep a hawk’s eye and save students from evil eye of technology.

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