## Classroom technology: What do students think?

Is technology in the classroom mostly a benefit to learning, or mostly a barrier? Educators have been debating the question for at least a decade. Yet the voices of the ultimate “end-users” - aka students - need to be included in the conversation, too.

You might be forgiven for expecting students to be uniformly gung-ho about classroom tech. After all, studies show young people currently spend more time on devices than any other activity - including sleeping!

But if you think students are in denial about the risks of classroom tech, think again. Studies show children have a surprisingly balanced understanding of the pros and cons.

A [study by US researchers](https://conference.iste.org/uploads/ISTE2016/HANDOUTS/KEY_100408235/HoldthePhoneHighschoolstudents.pdf), published in the journal *American Secondary Education*, looked specifically at the use of mobile phones for school-related work. Researchers surveyed over 600 high school students in 10 schools at the end of a year-long trial of using smartphones as learning devices.

Participating anonymously, students identified serious drawbacks associated with classroom phone use. These included

* Distraction from ringtones
* Cheating
* Disruption
* Cyberbullying
* Inappropriate content
* The erosion of writing skills

At the same time, they recognised a host of potential benefits, including

* Creativity
* Productivity
* Motivation for learning
* Improved attendance
* Increased engagement

Overall, nearly a third of students in this study believed phones should be banned from the classroom, although there were high levels of support for using phones in class, and 90% said they used phones for school-related work.

A [Swedish study](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10639-017-9615-0) published in the journal *Education and Information Technologies* in 2018 also found that secondary students gave an even-handed assessment of their own device use at school. They described their personal technology as “both a tool that facilitates their school work and a distraction that the teachers pursue.”

Overall, researchers found, “it seems like students … are actually rather aware of when to use and when not to use their mobile phones.”