



Addressing Technology Use in the Classroom

The Importance of a Technology Policy

It is crucial to have a technology policy in place for your class. Technology policies, sometimes referred to as netiquette policies, clarify to students the specific rules and expectations in your course related to the use of laptops, computers, phones, or other mobile devices.

N.B. Students with ADS accommodations that include for laptop/tablet use must ALWAYS be permitted to use them regardless of the class policy

Methods for addressing technology-use in the classroom

Have a Clear and Enacted Technology Policy

- The class syllabus and first class session should **clarify expectations and rules around technology and phone use**. This policy should be reiterated and upheld in class sessions.
- Ensuring you **move around the room** can assist with reminding students to stay on-topic.
- TAs can be an asset in terms of **monitoring appropriate technology use** in the class.

Designate a Laptop Zone

- Research indicates that as many as 3 students sitting behind a laptop user experience sufficient distraction to have poorer retention of the class material.

Thus it is important to:

- Assign a specific zone for note-takers who prefer to use laptops.
- Ensure **laptop users are not seated in front of pen-and-paper note-takers**.

Designate Laptop On-Off Times

- Balancing specific active learning moments e.g. think pair share, group work, scenario-based learning, case discussions, polling and results review in your class allows for segments where **students can use their laptops for notes but then put them away during the activities**.
- It's useful to put a 'laptop away' sign on screen before the activities to remind you to mention it.
- Try a **group note-taking strategy** e.g. a shared google doc where you designate one group per 10- 15 minute segment to write key points related to that day's theme - you then revise it and share it as a pdf as a study material so only one group need their laptops for note-taking.

Use Technology to benefit your Instruction

- When sharing statistics or important facts in class, you could **ask the students with laptops to be 'fact-checkers'** - this is an idea from a Maryland Smith instructor!
- Use **in-class quizzes** or **TurningPoint clicker polls** for more interactive learning, to gain feedback, or get responses and ensure the students are using their technology for learning.

Consider a No-Technology Policy

There are some important considerations for removing technology-use from the classroom:

- **Clarify expectations in your syllabus and lectures about no technology use in the room**
- It's important to offer more opportunities for students to engage in active learning
- Ensure you clarify that students can succeed without their laptops for note-taking e.g. using group note-taking, sharing slides after class, offering a review session
- Number your slides for pen-and-paper note-takers (this is a good practice regardless)