



Redacción Técnica y Científica en Inglés y en Español

Jazmin Damian Campos



Session 2 — In-Class Activity: Scrambled Texts

This report aims to assess the frequency and nature of smartphone use among secondary school students during instructional time, to identify patterns that may inform school policy, and to recommend guidelines for regulated device use in the classroom.

The results indicate that 74% of students accessed their smartphones at least once during a typical 50-minute class period. Of these, 61% reported using their devices for non-academic purposes, including social media (38%), messaging (29%), and video streaming (18%). Only 14% reported using smartphones for learning-related tasks such as dictionary look-up or note-taking.

The integration of mobile devices into educational settings has become a prominent concern for school administrators and policymakers across Latin America. In Mexico, secondary school teachers have reported increasing difficulty managing student attention in classrooms where smartphone use is unrestricted. This document presents the findings of a usage assessment conducted at three urban secondary schools in Quintana Roo during the spring semester of 2024.

These findings suggest that, without structured guidelines, smartphone use during class time is predominantly recreational rather than educational. This pattern is consistent with reports from secondary schools in other Mexican states (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2023, p. 47). The data indicate a need for clear institutional policy that distinguishes between authorized and unauthorized device use.

Data were collected through a structured self-report survey administered to 312 students across three schools. The survey was conducted anonymously during the final week of the semester. Students were asked to report their smartphone use habits during class periods over the previous two weeks. Survey design was adapted from the Mobile Learning Assessment Toolkit (Torres & Medina, 2021, pp. 33–36).

Smartphone access among Mexican secondary school students has increased significantly over the past decade. A national survey conducted by INEGI (2022, p. 12) found that 83% of students aged 12–15 own a personal device. Despite this, most schools lack formal policies that address device use during instructional time, creating inconsistent enforcement and reported tension between teachers and students.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that schools implement a tiered device policy that permits smartphone use only during designated activities supervised by a teacher. Staff training in digital classroom management should be incorporated into the existing professional development programme. A follow-up assessment is recommended at the close of the 2024–2025 academic year to evaluate the impact of any implemented policy. For further reference, see the Department of Secondary Education Guidelines (Dirección General de Secundarias, 2023, pp. 78–82).

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