Wireless :: Best Practices in the Classroom

The availability of wireless Internet connectivity has ushered in an era of limitless access to information in the classroom. Unfortunately, that information can be distracting and disruptive as well as enhancing and enlightening. We've gathered together here some hints and tips to help you maximize the opportunities wireless in the classroom can provide, while minimizing the disruption; feel free to modify these to suit your particular situations.

Note that students with disabilities may require exceptions to some of these guidelines.

Setting expectations

- Incorporate periods during class when laptop lids must be closed
- Tell students that laptops and cellphones must be turned off during test times
- Make it clear that penalties attach to inappropriate laptop use, just as they would for "traditional cheating"
- Encourage students to speak directly to peers if inappropriate laptop use makes them uncomfortable

Laptop and mobile device etiquette

- Turn off sound at the beginning of class
- Stay focused - checking your social network is distracting for your classmates as well as for you
- Don't ignore complaints from others that your online activities are distracting
- Abide by "no laptop" times

Making the most of wireless connectivity in the classroom

- Mix it up - use the Internet to create active learning opportunities
- Use your laptop to record the activities of team projects
- Seek frequent feedback from students
- Educate yourself on the effective integration of mobile wireless in the classroom

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