

How the iPhone Could Reboot Education

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How do you educate a generation of students eternally distracted by the internet, cellphones and video games? Easy. You enable them by handing out free iPhones — and then integrating the gadget into your curriculum.

That’s the idea Abilene Christian University has to refresh classroom learning. Located in Texas, the private university just finished its first year of a pilot program, in which 1,000 freshman students had the choice between a free iPhone or an iPod Touch.

The initiative’s goal was to explore how the always-connected iPhone might revolutionize the classroom experience with a dash of digital interactivity. Think web apps to turn in homework, look up campus maps, watch lecture podcasts and check class schedules and grades. For classroom participation, there’s even polling software for Abilene students to digitally raise their hand.

The verdict? It’s working quite well. 2,100 Abilene students, or 48 percent of the population, are now equipped with a free iPhone. Fully 97 percent of the faculty population has iPhones, too. The iPhone is aiding Abilene in giving students the information they need — when they want it, wherever they want it, said Bill Rankin, a professor of medieval studies who helped plan the initiative.[Article link](#)