

CHEAT SHEET: DEALING WITH DIGITAL DISTRACTION

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What Is It?

Don't make a ban -- have a plan! Whether it's smartphones or school-provided computers and tablets, digital devices can take learning in powerful new directions. But along with these tools comes digital distraction. Outright device bans are tempting but can create more conflicts than they're worth.

Instead, advocate for students' use of digital tools and model productive 21st-century learning. It's an opportunity to shift students' thinking about responsible tech use in the classroom and beyond. Here you'll find tips and tools to help you dodge the distractions and harness the power of technology in learning.

Three Essential Strategies:

1. Give kids meaningful things to do when they're on devices.

Capitalize on tools that promote higher-order thinking and learning. Look for platforms that encourage digital creation, online collaboration, communication outside the walls of the classroom, and new perspectives for critical thinking.

2. Set appropriate boundaries for in-class device use.

Find the right middle ground for you and your students, and make these boundaries clear. Consider the needs of your classroom as a whole, and differentiate boundaries for students with specific learning differences.

3. Build lessons that have a predictable flow of tech and non-tech activities.

Incorporate both screen-based and more traditional activities in your daily lessons. When needed, consider having a tech break when students can check their devices. Or, offer the inverse if relying heavily on a digital tool for a lesson or project.

Suggested Tools:

- Shadow Puppet Edu

Resource-rich video slide show creator a gem for elementary classrooms
<https://www.commonsense.org/education/app/shadow-puppet-edu>



- VoiceThread

Easily collaborate and create with voice, video, or image
<https://www.commonsense.org/education/website/voicethread>



- Explain Everything

Powerhouse tool for creating stellar multimedia presentations
<https://www.commonsense.org/education/app/explain-everything>



Did you try these tips? Let us know how it went. We may even incorporate your ideas into future resources. Email us at: edurequests@commonsense.org