

The Pros and Cons of BYOD in Education

At first glance, [mobile technology and the classroom](#) seems like a match made in heaven, providing a wealth of advantages for students, educators, and administrators alike. Distance learning, collaboration technology, videoconferencing, and other tech innovations have definitely directly impacted the education industry, by opening new learning and teaching opportunities. But one trend has been given industry decision makers pause: “Bring your own device,” or BYOD, in education.

BYOD policies allow teachers and students to use their own devices in the classroom. However, mobile devices carry the potential for distractions, as well as the potential for security hacks, and facilities must provide IT support for the students’ devices.

Establishing a BYOD policy involves careful consideration from administrators. They must thoughtfully develop the initial rules for acceptable devices, the capabilities of those tools, and parent-teacher communication. And of course, all students should have access to the same resources, so underprivileged students don’t end up at a disadvantage.

The Pros and Cons of BYOD in Schools

There are some automatic “pros” to allowing even young students to “bring their own device.” There’s an upfront cost saving when it comes to technology expenses, IT support costs are generally lower, and [acquainting students with technology at an early age](#) benefits them in the long-term. BYOD programs also provide pupils with more convenient and eco-friendly educational tools and resources. Some of the tangible benefits to a BYOD school program can include:

- Savings on hardware.
- Familiarizing students with software and connectivity, which augments their learning experience and better prepares them for higher education and careers.
- Personalizing learning opportunities, as the instructors can track students’ individual needs more efficiently with mobile programs.
- Using [online games for better learning](#).

Prepare for Potential Snares

BYOD programs aren’t without drawbacks, however. The financial situation of the school or organization is an obvious factor when determining IT support costs. Technology is a part of everyday life, and students with mobile devices can be easily distracted rather than enriched. It would be difficult for a teacher to take an inappropriately used device away from a student when the device is necessary to the lesson plan.

Educators must also prepare for a classroom full of unique devices that work harmoniously. If students bring their own devices, a classroom of [30 pupils could mean 30 different platforms](#). Luckily, teachers can effectively manage a BYOD program in the classroom by:

- Establishing a firm strategy for integrating and supporting BYOD programs.
- Ensuring the organization is financially and technically equipped to support BYOD.
- Providing the necessary training and IT support structure for educators—as we all know kids generally outpace adults when it comes to the latest technology.
- Setting clear parameters for parents regarding which devices and applications are acceptable, and which are not.
- Controlling device use with clear policies and appropriate usage times.
- Encouraging personal responsibility and mutual support between the students - have the smartest students teach those lagging behind.

Mobile technology means the blackboard no longer restricts teachers. They can move through the classroom and engage with students. This will also help monitor proper usage. Consider the needs of the students, the types of acceptable devices, and the required support. While an efficient and thoughtfully executed BYOD program is an incredible asset to the entire organization, a mishandled or poorly managed one can result in school-wide setbacks at best, or angry parents at worst.