

Teaching in the Digital Age: Helping Learners Build Better Study Habits Beyond Screens

Katherine V. Queroda, EdD
Pangasinan State University
Katherinequeroda_ling@psu.edu.ph

Dr. Katherine V. Queroda is an Assistant Professor IV at Pangasinan State University (PSU)–Lingayen Campus, where she serves as a faculty member of the Professional Education Department under the College of Teacher Education. She teaches Experiential Learning Courses, particularly Field Study and Teaching Internship, mentoring pre-service teachers and facilitating their transition from theory to professional practice.

In addition to her appointment at PSU Lingayen, Dr. Queroda is an Affiliate Professor at the PSU Open University Systems, where she teaches graduate courses in the Master of Arts in Education, major in Educational Management program. She earned her Doctor of Education (EdD), major in Educational Management, from the same institution.

As an emerging scholar, Dr. Queroda's research interests focus on teaching pedagogy, educational management, experiential learning, and innovative instructional practices. She has presented her research at international conferences, sharing insights that contribute to the advancement of teacher education and effective teaching strategies. Through her work in instruction, research, and community engagement, she remains dedicated to promoting educational excellence, fostering lifelong learning, and supporting the professional development of future and practicing educators.

Scrolling, Swiping, and Studying: Can Today's Learners Do It All?

A familiar scene unfolds in many homes and classrooms today, where a student sits with an open textbook, but their attention frequently shifts to a smartphone buzzing with notifications from social media. Minutes intended for studying become hours of scrolling through videos, posts, and online conversations. While digital technology has revolutionized access to information and learning opportunities, it has also introduced new challenges that educators cannot ignore.

Today's learners belong to a generation that has grown up surrounded by technology. Smartphones, tablets, and laptops have become indispensable tools for communication, entertainment, and education. However, the same devices that facilitate learning can also become major sources of distraction. As teachers strive to prepare students for academic success, understanding the impact of social media and gadget use on study habits has become increasingly important.

The Changing Face of Student Study Habits

Unlike previous generations who relied heavily on libraries and printed materials, modern learners can access vast amounts of information with a few taps on a screen. This convenience offers numerous advantages, but it has also changed how students approach learning.

Many students engage in multitasking while studying like switching between assignments, social media platforms, online videos, and messaging applications. Although they may feel productive, research consistently suggests that multitasking often reduces concentration and learning efficiency.

Another noticeable trend is the preference for immediate answers. Search engines and artificial intelligence tools provide instant information and this leads with some learners to prioritize quick solutions over deep analysis and critical thinking. Additionally, the popularity of short-form content has contributed to shorter attention spans that makes it difficult for students to sustain focus during lengthy reading or complex academic tasks.

Perhaps most concerning is the growing tendency for irregular study routines. With entertainment constantly available at their fingertips, many learners postpone academic work until deadlines approach which eventually results in stress and superficial learning.

Teachers Still Matter More Than Ever

The digital age has not diminished the role of teachers; rather, it has expanded it. Educators are no longer simply providers of knowledge. They are mentors, facilitators, and guides who help students navigate an information-rich but distraction-filled world.

Instead of viewing technology as the enemy, effective educators recognize its potential while teaching learners how to use it responsibly and productively.

Strategies for Building Better Study Habits

1. Encourage Self-Regulated Learning

One of the most valuable skills students can develop is the ability to manage their own learning. Teachers can help learners set realistic academic goals, create study schedules, and monitor their progress through reflection journals and self-assessment activities.

When students learn to take ownership of their learning, they become less dependent on external reminders and more capable of resisting distractions.

2. Turn Technology into a Learning Partner

Banning gadgets entirely is neither practical nor desirable. Instead, teachers can harness technology as a powerful educational resource.

Interactive learning applications, digital quizzes, collaborative online projects, and educational videos can transform gadgets from sources of distraction into tools for engagement and learning. When students experience technology as a means of achieving academic success, their relationship with digital devices begins to change.

3. Make Learning Active and Meaningful

Students are more likely to remain focused when they are actively involved in the learning process.

Strategies such as Project-Based Learning, Inquiry-Based Learning, and collaborative group activities encourage learners to solve problems, explore real-world issues, and apply knowledge in meaningful ways. Active participation reduces boredom and minimizes opportunities for off-task behavior.

4. Teach Digital Wellness

Just as students learn about physical health, they should also learn about digital health.

Teachers can facilitate discussions about responsible social media use, screen-time management, online safety, and the effects of excessive gadget use on mental well-being. Educators can help students develop healthier habits that extend beyond the classroom by promoting digital wellness.

5. Break Learning into Manageable Chunks

Today's learners often respond better to shorter-focused learning experiences.

Microlearning—delivering content in small, manageable segments—can help maintain attention while improving retention. Short discussions, brief instructional videos, and frequent formative assessments can keep learners engaged without overwhelming them.

6. Establish Consistent Learning Routines

Good study habits thrive on consistency. Teachers can support learners by maintaining predictable classroom structures, providing clear expectations, and encouraging the use of planners and study schedules.

Regular routines help students develop discipline, organization, and accountability which are considered qualities essential for lifelong learning.

7. Promote Reflection and Metacognition

Successful learners think about how they learn. Through reflective journals, self-evaluations, and guided discussions, teachers can encourage students to examine their study habits and identify areas for improvement.

Metacognitive (thinking about your own thinking) skills enable learners to recognize distractions, adjust strategies, and become more effective in managing their academic responsibilities.

Technology is here to stay, and social media will continue to shape how learners interact with the world. The challenge for educators is not to eliminate these influences but to help students develop the discipline and skills necessary to use them wisely.

Teachers can transform potential distractions into opportunities for growth by fostering self-regulation, promoting digital wellness, and implementing learner-centered pedagogies. In doing so, they prepare learners not only for academic success but also for responsible participation in an increasingly connected world.

As education continues to evolve, one truth remains constant: meaningful learning occurs not through the devices students hold in their hands, but through the habits, values, and critical thinking skills they develop while using them.

"Technology should not replace good study habits; rather, it should support them. The task of educators today is to teach learners how to thrive in a digital world without becoming distracted by it."