

Using the Cell Phone to Promote Homework -Lenore Balliro, First Literacy

Basic principle:

Start with the teaching/learning goals, not with the use of technology for its own sake. Think about what you want to do, and then how the technology can help you. Always have an explicit rationale for integrating technology.

Goal:

To get students to use their new language in between classes and to become more active agents in their own learning in between classes.

Have students use phone cameras to build on language learning you are introducing in the classroom. Keep a checklist for students who respond. Recognize that it might take practice to catch on. Each suggestion below requires preparation and modeling to make it work effectively. You could try some of the ideas in class before assigning them as homework. Keep it simple, and create predictable routines.		
Low Level	Intermediate	Advanced
Camera Ask students to take photos of signs they do not understand and send them, to you via a text message before the next class. Text a reminder to students if they are sluggish about responding. Compile the signs, print out and use as teaching tools for the next class. Build on the vocabulary, including context (where was the sign)	Texting Assign texting partners. Give students a prompt related to your place in the curriculum that encourages interaction. Ask students to text their partner about the prompt. Assign student #1 to start the text process. For example, in a unit on health, ask students to respond to a question like: How do you feel about going to the doctor in the US? During the next class, ask each student to report on what they found out about his or her partner via the texts.	Tweeting/Texting When you are reading a biography or novel, ask students to display understanding of the main character by creating tweets in that person's voice, or by texting you in that person's voice. Ask for one text or tweet from each student and compare the tweets during the next class. For example, if you are reading a biography of Rosa Parks, what would she be tweeting now?
Camera Ask students to take photos of people "doing" something to practice present continuous and to text you a picture and one sentence beneath it. Ex: She is praying.	Texting Have students practice writing by texting you to tell you they will be absent from class and why. Collect responses and analyze collective errors. Use to create a mini lesson to address common errors and to review Netiquette.	Google Maps Ask students to use Google Maps to calculate the distance between their own homes and the program. Then ask them to write directions from their homes to the program, step by step.

Your Turn

With your partner, think about ways in which you could use cell phones to reinforce language learning in between classes. Think about all the skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening.

Low	Intermediate	Advanced

