WhatsApp Goes to School: Mobile Instant Messaging between Teachers and Students

# Details

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## Authors

Bouhnik D.;Deshen M.

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## Sample

Twelve high school teachers were interviewed, nine women and three men. Seven of them are homeroom class teachers and five are subject-matter teachers.

## Implications For Educators About

Other

# Abstract

WhatsApp is a Smartphone application for instant messaging. Lately the application's popularity
has risen. One of the unique features of the application is its ability to enhance communication
within a group. Classroom communication between teaching faculty and high school students
using WhatsApp has not yet, to our knowledge, been researched thoroughly. Therefore, we have
chosen to conduct an exploratory research project employing a qualitative method. Twelve halfstructured interviews were carried out with teachers who use the application in order to communicate with their pupils.
It turns out that class WhatsApp groups are used for four main purposes: communicating with
students; nurturing the social atmosphere; creating dialogue and encouraging sharing among students; and as a learning platform. The participants mentioned the technical advantages of
WhatsApp, such as simple operation, low cost, availability, and immediacy. They also referred to
educational advantages, such as the creation of a pleasant environment and an in-depth acquaintance with fellow students, which had a positive influence upon the manner of conversation. The
participants also indicated academic advantages such as the accessibility of learning materials,
teacher availability, and the continuation of learning beyond class hours. Nevertheless, there are
also challenges and problems. Firstly, there is the technical difficulty that not all high school students possess a Smartphone. Secondly, teachers are apt to be annoyed by the flood of irrelevant
and nonsensical messages. Also, educational difficulties may arise, such as incompatibility of
language between students and the students' assumptions that their teachers should be available
on a 24/7 basis.

# Outcome

The WhatsApp’s groups examined were oriented to at least four goals: communicating with students, grooming a positive atmosphere and a sense of belonging in the class, creating a dialogue, using and sharing a learning platform (Bouhnik Deshen, 2014). All of the teachers, at the start, thought about implementing one or two goals, but over time discovered that groups fulfilled other purposes as well. Teachers were not aware of other goals of using WhatsApp, rather than their own. They did not share their experience with other teachers; each one of them thought that they were the one who was working with
WhatsApp. the conclusion of this study is that it is worthwhile to find a way to establish a
dialogue between teachers, so that they can exchange ideas and suggestions about how to deal
with the challenges and to broaden their understanding of the ways the application can implement
the school’s educational and pedagogical goal.
Examining the educational aspect of WhatsApp has demonstrated a variety of benefits. The open
style discussion enables the teachers to get to know their students in-depth and to create a positive
atmosphere as well as a sense of belonging. However, challenges, such as the demand for constant availability, foul language and behavior and the witnessing the students’ private world, may cause adults to feel uncomfortable. It is also worth taking into account that operating such a group requires the teachers to invest time beyond their regular work hours, in addition to being swamped with messages.