WhatsApp goes to school: Mobile instant messaging between teachers and students

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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

# 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 half-structured interviews were carried out with teachers who use the application in order to commu-nicate 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 stu-dents; 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 acquaint-ance 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 stu-dents 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 current study (Bouhnik Deshen, 2014) indicated that 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. 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. Examining the educational aspect of WhatsApp has demonstrated a variety of benefits.