

# Beep...



## message received!

### Mobile phones in the classroom

Did you ever think you would see the day when we would be welcoming mobile phones into our classrooms? Well, a pilot project trialling the use of mobile phones and text-based web chat may have changed our perspectives on their use as learning tools...

The NCCA, along with the NCTE (National Centre for Technology in Education), has been running a pilot project with three Irish teachers and their second year students at Ratoath College in Co. Meath, which examined the use of mobile phones and text-based web chat for teaching and learning Irish.

#### How were the mobile phones used?

Each student was supplied with a mobile phone which they used to

- dial an Irish question prompt system
- receive Irish vocabulary text messages each day.

CÉN T-AINM ATÁ AR DO  
MHÚINTEOIR BÉARLA?  
CAD É DO DHÁTA BREITHE?  
DÉAN CUR SÍOS AR  
LAETHANTA SAOIRE A  
BHÍ AGAT CHEANA

Here's how it worked. Students were given the number for the Irish question prompt system and when they dialled it and logged in using a student

number and PIN, they were presented with a random set of ten questions from a pool of twenty questions. These questions were developed by the Irish teachers taking part in the pilot project. Students also received a vocabulary word per day, randomly chosen from a pool of words and phrases determined by their teachers.



#### How did the teachers work with the technology?

Teachers logged on to a web-based interface to

- listen to their students' responses
- provide feedback
- send vocabulary text messages.

All responses and feedback were saved, so the teacher could record and print a feedback sheet for students on their responses. Alternatively, students could download a podcast of their responses with their teacher's feedback included.

#### Text-based web chat

The second type of technology being investigated was text-based web chat. This wasn't like your usual open internet chat room, it was a space students logged into during fixed periods when they were monitored by their teachers.

The focus of each chat session was provided by the teacher –

- a movie or song to discuss
- a theme for a story to be written

- between chat partners
- conversation between a shopkeeper and an irate customer
- how to use your text message vocabulary as often as possible in a meaningful way.

As students chatted, each sentence was monitored by their teacher. All chat conversations were saved, so that the teacher could go back and provide feedback for each student on their input. A similar feedback sheet to that provided on students' responses on the mobile phone was also provided for chat conversations.

The mobile phones and text-based web chat proved popular with teachers and students alike. Teachers found that the technology allowed them to hear responses from every student, even those who are usually quieter in class. They also found the web-based interface more interactive than using a red pen for providing feedback. Students said they 'weren't as nervous' providing responses to questions on the phone as they would be in front of their teacher and class.

Keep your eye on [info@ncca](#) for future updates and if you hear a text message being received in your school...it may just be today's vocabulary arriving!

