

Teachers using phones as a tool in classrooms

By Daniela Gerson, Los Angeles Times

Priscilla Farinas, an English teacher at Social Justice Humanitas Academy in San Fernando, faced her 31 students recently and made an announcement that seemingly violates official Los Angeles Unified policy.

“This is the one and only time I will have you take out your cellphones,” she said, instructing the students to share their definitions of “privilege” via text message as part of a lesson on “The Great Gatsby.”

Students immediately grabbed their mobile devices. Their texts populated a screen in the front of the classroom. Every student appeared focused on their schoolwork.

Farinas wanted to flip the script: Rather than reprimanding her students for using their phones, she wanted to put them to work as a learning tool. She is among a growing number of teachers who are instructing students to use their phones to conduct research, listen to music, calculate math problems or photograph assignments.

Read the whole story