

## IT'S TIME WE EDUCATE OURSELVES AND OUR STUDENTS ABOUT SMARTPHONES

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### ABSTRACT

Smartphones since their inception have been used for communication, information, and entertainment, with social media and video apps dominating users' time on device. However, every year, more and more basic functions of life from banking and taxes to class registrations and job applications are requiring or expecting users to own a smartphone as part of the online process. Consequently, it is becoming harder and harder to find anyone without a smartphone in hand or within reach. In fact, it would not be hyperbolic to suggest as some philosophers have that smartphones have become an essential part of how we think and live. And yet, in education, smartphones have either been treated as a distraction or worry or promoted as an opportunity for developing innovative products or techniques. This situation is untenable and represents an incredibly obvious blind spot for educators and citizens given the fundamental purpose of education to cultivate independent and creative thinking children who are prepared for the future. This workshop will provide participants a chance to begin considering how administrations, educators, and citizens should address this issue based on a foundation of purpose, trust, and open communication about how we might reframe the role of smartphones in our lives and education.



Thomas E. Webster is an assistant professor at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Korea. He holds a PhD in education, an MFA in photography, and an MEd in teaching second languages. He has taught a variety of undergraduate and graduate level courses including academic reading and writing, speech & debate, photography, and TESOL multimedia and methodology. His research interests include technology and communication in education, grounded theory, and ethics in research methodology. His latest project focuses on approaches to understanding smartphones in students' lives and learning.