Not Just for Selfies

College Reading in the Age of Cell Phones
First some facts to consider:

72% of college students prefer print
Reasons given include: ease of use, lack of internet distraction, tangible highlighting, portability

50% of students are printing out e-texts and digital resources

According to Pew Research Center, non-college educated and non-whites are increasing using cell phones as a primary reading device

Americans, including millennials, are still reading at rates unchanged since 2012. Most prefer traditional books over e-texts.
Students Don’t Always Recognize the Impact of Reading on their Cell Phones

• Multiple studies measuring the impact of cell phones on learning and reading comprehension have shown that even when students self-report that they prefer reading on the cell phone, their ability to retain information is better with print texts.

  • From “Reading Across Mediums: Effects of Reading Digital and Print Texts on Comprehension and Calibration” Singer and Alexander, Journal of Experimental Education, 2017
What Can We Do?

• Talk to students about their habits
• Talk to students about equity and access
• Have them develop a pros and cons list of reading on a cell phone
• Weave in reading activities that model appropriate uses of cell phones
When Reading on Your Cell Phone is a Good Idea
Take Away

• Cell phones aren’t going away. We need to talk to students about, and model, ethical and appropriate use of cell phones as part of our curriculum.