

# **Lapbooks as a Tool for Critical Thinking and Digital Literacy**

Kristyna Kilianova and Petra Kockova, University of Ostrava, Czech Republic

## **Abstract**

This pilot classroom project explores how lower secondary students can critically engage with the topic of mobile phone use in schools. The goal was not to follow pre-determined rules or attitudes, but to provide a space for students to explore, reflect and discuss the issue through information seeking, peer interaction and creative expression.

The study was conducted in a Czech primary school with three classes (N = 56, 8th and 9th grade). The students worked in small groups to find arguments for and against the use of phones in the school environment, to respond to the opinions of others and to discuss their attitudes. They then expressed their thoughts visually using a lapbook design and wrote short opinion essays summarizing their conclusions.

Students' written outputs were analysed using qualitative content analysis. Recurring key concepts and themes were coded and generalised into broader categories reflecting shared views. Although opinions varied, the majority of students supported limited and purposeful use of the phone under teacher supervision. Common arguments in favour included access to information, usefulness in group work, and the ability to communicate in emergency situations. Concerns centred on distraction, abuse, cheating, and reduced attention span.

This process culminated in the joint development of classroom rules for phone use based on group discussion and mutual understanding. This participatory approach not only strengthened students' reading and digital literacy skills, but also fostered critical thinking, respectful communication and responsibility for classroom rules.

This pilot study provides a basis for extending the research to other schools and demonstrates the potential of creative methods such as lapbooks in developing 21st century skills.