“Pupils allowed to use iPods in class to 'get more work done' Class act: Apple's iPod”

By Julie Henry 12:01AM BST 04 Jun 2006

Teachers are allowing children to listen to MP3 players during lessons because "it keeps them quiet". While many head teachers are banning digital music players, such as iPods, teachers in some schools let pupils listen to their own music while they are supposed to be doing individual work, arguing that it helps them to concentrate. "I have started to allow them when students are doing their work," one secondary school teacher wrote on an education website. "The results are very positive. Students are less chatty, get more work done and classroom management has improved." Another said: "I used to allow them, until a parent complained. It kept the kids focused on their work. I only allowed them to listen with one earphone. Then you could still get their attention when you needed to." Some members of staff use MP3 players to appease potentially disruptive pupils. "I find it gets the kids on side," said a teacher. "They are more likely to work and concentrate as they perceive me as being reasonable. This way, the pupils are working and I come out as the good guy.

Digital music players are the must ­have accessory for young people. A survey of more than 1,000 teenagers by an insurance company found that one in five owned an iPod. Schools are increasingly confiscating them because pupils refuse to restrict their use to the playground. However, teachers who "turn a blind eye" to the use of MP3 players were roundly criticised. Nick Seaton, the chairman of the Campaign for Real Education, said: "Most sensible people will be horrified that children can listen to personal stereos in class. Too many teachers are letting children dictate the ground rules." Chris Keates, the general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, said the practice could lead to a raft of problems. "There is the difficulty of trying to ensure that pupils are actually doing the work while listening to iPods," she told The Sunday Telegraph. "It could also be distracting for pupils who might not have personal stereos ­ we all know how annoying it can be when you sit next to someone listening to one." Some teachers were equally sceptical and said that while earphone music might "keep the maniacs quiet", it would do nothing to improve their learning. "Absolutely not," said one. "There is not enough time in a lesson to fuss around and students then take advantage. If a lesson has pace and students are engaged and thinking then there is no time to listen to music."

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