

## Theorizing Internet Lingo in Educational Technology

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The use of Internet lingo, short message service language (SMS), texting, and instant messaging is becoming a part of a student's everyday communication, both written and spoken. Both students and younger adults use various acronyms available in their text message, email accounts, or social media sites to converse with their friends or colleagues in a way that simplifies the speech in a short amount of space. For many of the older generation, it is next to impossible to understand some of the text due to a written conversation looking more like secret code or hieroglyphics. Some of the popular acronyms used are; LOL - *laugh out loud*, OMG - *Oh My God/Gosh*, ASAP - *as soon as possible*, and B4N - *bye for now*. With almost 1 billion people using social media sites, the use of acronyms is becoming more prevalent and ultimately replacing the need for full, grammatically correct sentences. With such a growing trend in our youth of tomorrow, the classic English classes may soon be replaced with, "All You Need to Know in 140 Characters".



### Death of modern language

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The use of SMS began in the mid 80's, but didn't really find commercial use until the early 90's when phone companies saw the eventual possibilities. According to David Crystal's, *Txtng: the Gr8 Db8*, an average of 35 text messages were sent in the year 2000 with the prediction to reach over 2.4 trillion texts ten years later. Almost 85% of North Americans are users of SMS, 77% of 13-16 year-olds, and 38% of 9-12 year-olds are using social media sites. Both of these areas of the World Wide Web use a large amount of acronyms to text ideas, stories, and converse with others on a daily basis.

The use of written acronyms is nothing new and Crystal references the common phrase, IOU - /

*owe you*, as far back as 1618. It has also been found in Second World War letters, SWALK - *sealed with a kiss*, classroom chalkboards, PLO - *please leave on*, and work by 1867 Victorian writers featuring numerous acronyms and abbreviations.

The concern with the trillions of text messages or use of acronyms by so many of our youth, is whether or not there will a long term impact on the development of both written and spoken language. This new form of communication with each other has no standards or rules and is full of abbreviations that are developing in numbers everyday. Often phrases are made up on the spot and who knows if they will be remembered or written down to be saved for future generations. This form of writing is not just for smartphones, but it is being used everyday in email, cell phones, blogging, written journals, and in casual conversation.

In order to embrace the use of texting and accept it for what it is and how to use it in educational technology, educators need to be creative in adapting this form of writing into their own curriculum. This will not only validate the knowledge that students already have on using such acronyms, but also manufacture a sense of excitement in subject areas where teachers struggle to inspire written work. Some examples of how texting can be woven into the fabric of the English language is by creating poetry using 140 characters. The standard rules of a specific poem can still apply, but the challenge for students will be using the texting lingo to formulate phrases that others can understand. Setting up a Twitter account and writing as a famous author or character in a book, can pose an exciting challenge to anyone trying to stay within the necessary 140 characters and write something clear and succinct.

It is important for our youth not to lose sight of the historical background and use the classic English language, as we know it. Youth of today, however are forever changing and adapting to the needs of the future. These needs must include past and present forms to continue building towards the future.

#### References:

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