Cell phones: To be in the classroom or not to be in the classroom?
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This research examines the relationship of the academic performance of low performing students and the use of cell phones in the classroom.

Rationale: Minimizing classroom distractions can be challenging in the age of smartphones, a technology that is rapidly evolving. Since the onset of widespread cell phone usage in schools, administrators and teachers have struggled to implement and adhere to policies about usage in classrooms. However, many variables affect the policies. Parents want to ensure the safety of their students in a world seemingly filled with violence, teachers want to minimize distractions in class, and students do not want to part with their property. Although technology places information at our fingertips, all students do not utilize the educational feature of the technology; many prefer the entertainment value. In schools where student performance falls below achievement goals, students can't be expected to create distraction free environments for themselves. School policies are not moving as rapidly as technology; meanwhile, smart phones are becoming more desirable and more useful. Therefore, school leaders and educators are charged with making decisions that keep pace with the evolving technology. Teachers are charged with creatively integrating the technology into student learning or creating technology free learning environments.

Literature Review

The article, "The Relationship Between Cell Phone Use and Academic Performance in a Sample of U.S. College Students" by Barkley, Lepp, and Karpinski highlights cell phone use that extends beyond call and text features to include The research reports that excessive video gaming was associated with lower academic performance and infrequent Internet usage was associated with improved academic performance. Moreover, the research revealed that playing video games was linked with lower academic performance. As technology continues to advance, the researchers suggest the need to understand how technology can be used to contribute to student learning.

Another study, "Cell Phones in American High Schools: A National Survey" was used to gage the perceptions of administrators as it relates to cell phone issues. Data researchers sampled US college students and published a study in March of 2015.

The study focuses on issues regarding policy and technology such as distractions in class, cheating on exams and quizzes, cyber bullying and the use of camera phones to take embarrassing photographs in spaces that are meant to be private. The problem with these violations is that they take students away from their academic purposes. The survey also

found that cellphones ringing in class has a negative effect on classroom instruction and is an ongoing issue. Further, the study indicates that due to the rapid expansion of technology, policies on cell phone usage need to change in order to keep pace, and suggests that this is the challenge faced by school leaders.

Richard Freed, in the book, *Wired Child: Reclaiming Childhood in a Digital age,* states, "High levels of smartphone use by teens often have a detrimental effect on achievement, because teen phone use is dominated by entertainment, not learning, applications". This means we have more work to do before deciding on the best technology use in schools. Lastly, a 2014 Stanford University study on at- risk students' learning with technology revealed that giving, " one on one access" to technology in school provides the most benefit; however, the study did not list smartphones as an optimal tool to ensure student engagement or academic success.

In conclusion, all literature reviewed suggests that school leaders and educators are charged with deciding the best ways to address the use of smart phones in classrooms and there seems to be no easy answers to the new breed of concerns ushered in by the wired world we now live in. The question is, will schools be left behind or will we rise to the occasion and find the best ways to ensure that all students succeed in the digital world?

Data /Tools/Process

I distributed 66 oral surveys many respondents were reluctant to write, I have included the oral interview sessions.

Data Analysis –The data revealed that three- quarters of respondents sampled feel that students should have access to their phones while in the classroom and that their smart phones benefit them academically. Similarly 93 percent of students' believe that cell phone use, and being on social media during class interfered with their ability to access the lesson. Further, 90 percent of those sampled feel that the use of smart phones in school was a social benefit to them. I was surprised to discover that 92 percent of those surveyed feel that locking their cell phones up during the day would allow them to be more focused in class and the majority of students state that they used their cell phones for academic purposes and to contact family members.

Recommendations- It is necessary for school leaders and teachers to decide whether to integrate cell phones into the curriculum or to abolish cell phone use in the classroom. This technology is only going to improve as time goes on and schools need to prepare in advance as well as update their policies based on the rapid transformation of the technology. Also, in low performing school environments, it would be a benefit for

struggling students to minimize distractions; therefore, I recommend regulated cell phone usage. Technology is ever changing; policies need to change often as well. Revision should be based on academic performance and/or teachers' willingness to create instruction that incorporates use of the smart phones. Further research is needed to identify and rank the benefits of cell phone use in classrooms as well as how the use of cell phones in low performing schools affects academic growth and performance.

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