



Cell Phones in the Classroom

Easy to Use

Easy to Manage

<mailto:housej@gcschools.net>

If You Can't Beat Them.....Join Them!
Solving the Cell phone "Problem" at Greeneville High School

Dr. Linda B. Stroud, Principal

Do you know anyone who can look you in the eye and carry on a conversation while furiously and proficiently texting in their hoodie pocket without detection even under your most intense scrutiny? If you are a secondary teacher or administrator, you probably know hundreds of such people. They are called teenagers!

Misuse of cell phones by students is a rampant problem in most secondary schools across the U.S., and administrators are scrambling to find policies and solutions that effectively deal with this "problem." The same was true at Greeneville High School. In 2007-2008, cell phone policy violation was the number one student behavior issue and was seriously impeding the effectiveness of the school discipline plan. The policy of "no cell phones in sight and no cell phone usage during the school day" was simply not working. It had gotten so bad that our discipline committee was researching cell phone transmission blockers for our campus (that is illegal, by the way!).

In 2008-2009 we changed our entire cell phone policy. But more importantly, we changed our beliefs about student cell phone usage in our school. We finally came to understand that cell phones are neither toys nor a fad. They are not going away. They are, in fact, a powerful technology tool we should be utilizing for teaching and learning. Just think about all the things that one can do with most cell phones: make calls, text, take pictures and video, email, and connect to the internet. And the beauty of it is that they cost us nothing. Parents are paying for our students' cell phones!

Therefore, because of this revelation, this past year we began using cell phones as instructional tools at GHS. Teachers are encouraged to have students use their cell phones to blog to class web pages, do video and audio podcasts, find word translations, and calculate currency conversion rates. Students utilize their phones for research and as dictionaries by accessing Google (text 466453) or ChaCha (text 242242 or dial 1-800-2-chacha). Students even use their phones as individual "clickers" for summative assessments by accessing the free site polleverywhere.com. In fact, all 1000 students and staff members at GHS voted in our school-wide 2008 presidential election by using polleverywhere.com and we all watched our school election results come in live on graphs displayed on classroom televisions. Students are also encouraged to use the calendar and notepad functions on their phones to document homework assignments and set the alarm function as a reminder to study for tests and exams. This has eliminated the necessity of those expensive "school planners" that normally end up at the bottom of a locker. These are just a few examples of how cell phones can be used as learning tools.

We are often asked, "What about students who do not have cell phones?" Our finding is that the vast majority of our students do have a cell phone of some type. In fact, a GHS student survey revealed that 98% of our students have a cell phone at school, even though almost 45% of our students qualify for free and reduced lunch. For differences in cell phone capabilities, and for students who do not have phones, we simply use cooperative learning and differentiate the assignments based on cell phone function, just as we differentiate instruction for student abilities and learning styles.

While the use of cell phones as instructional tools is highly motivating for both students and teachers in the classroom, we do not just turn our students loose all day to use their cell phones to text their friends! Students are not to have phones in sight without permission from the time they enter the school in the morning until the final dismissal bell rings in the afternoon. This includes any cell phone usage in the halls, cafeteria, on bus duty, etc. Students are now required to place cell phones on the desks at the beginning of each class in the “off” or “silent” mode, or in a central location such as a basket. This takes away students’ ability to text undetected in hoodie pockets! If a student touches a phone or one rings or buzzes during class, students are effectively “busted” as there is no question as to whose phone was in use. Students may only use phones in class for instructional purposes with teacher permission and under the direction of the teacher.

We also changed the consequence portion of our cell phone policy. If a student breaks these simple rules, the cell phone is taken by the teacher and sent to the main office with a form documenting the student name, teacher name, and date the phone was confiscated. The phone is then kept in the main office for seven days. Seven days is a purposeful number because students and parents will not typically purchase another phone during a seven day period. However, in the past we found that due to the reduction in the cost of cell phones, if a phone was taken for a period of 30 days or the remainder of the school year the student would simply buy a new phone. Additionally, a seven-day period of time will include a weekend without a cell phone for students, which they want to avoid at all cost!

If a student simply cannot live without his or her phone for seven days, or if a parent objects to not being able to communicate with his child for a week, our new policy allows for a choice other than the seven day confiscation. Students may come to the office at the end of the school day, and for a \$20 fine they may have the phone returned! They cannot pay the fine until the end of the day. We have found that our students will gladly pay the \$20 in order to have the phone returned, but they do not want to pay \$20 multiple times, which has resulted in compliance with the policy! Parents have also been very supportive of this novel approach and usually insist that the student pay the fine himself in order to have the phone returned. Additionally, we took the cell phone policy violation out of the GHS discipline policy, greatly reducing the number of lunch detentions for such violations. We have found the consequences of keeping the phone for seven days or the \$20 fine to be more effective than a separate discipline infraction. We do, however, still consider it a major violation of our discipline policy if a student refuses to comply with a teacher for a phone confiscation or if a student misuses a cell phone at school for the purpose of inappropriate pictures, videos, texts, etc. Thankfully, those types of incidents were not issues during the 2008-2009 school year.

The results of our new policy are in. Simply put, it’s working! If you consider that we have 900 students at GHS, multiplied by four classes per day, and then multiplied by 180 school days, those figures equal a total of 648,000 opportunities for student cell phone violations. At Greeneville High School during the 2008-2009 school year, we only had 137 cell phone violations. Of those 137, thirty-four students chose to leave his or her cell phone in the office for seven days. One hundred and three students chose to pay the \$20 fine, resulting in a total of \$2060 in cell phone fines. All of that money was spent on our students. The fine money was used to provide a reward day this spring for our senior class who won our GHS Spirit initiative, a year-long school spirit competition among our four grade levels. The seniors were treated to a day at a local retreat center and enjoyed a low ropes course, games, a cook-out lunch, and time to be together with their friends.

Cell phone technology has definitely changed the way we look at our policies at Greeneville High School. Cell phones are no longer a problem at GHS, but are now considered to be powerful technology tools to be used for teaching and learning. All it takes is a change in paradigm and policy!

For more information go to www.gcschools.net/ghs and click on the “Using Cell Phones as Learning Tools” memo under the Highlights section.

Cell phones are a distraction in class. So is the class clown, a window, a paper clip, and snow. Saying that cell phones should be banned in schools because they're 'too distracting' is a cop out. If your current classroom management model can't incorporate mobile devices.... well, then it's time to do some unlearning and relearning. Fact is, they aren't going away. If anything, they're only becoming more and more prevalent. School budgets are tight, and here we are with millions of dollars in technology being paid for by the parents VOLUNTARILY... and most schools refuse to leverage it because of outdated policies and teachers that don't want to modify their own classroom management strategies.

Classroom management is what will trip your program up. It's really quite simple. Basically, all phones must be on silent, not vibrate. If a phone rings or shakes, it's yours. Don't give them warnings. It's not a big deal. Students just need to know you're serious and that these are the rules. Have student place their cell phones on their desks when class starts. Sometimes students can be rewarded for placing them there without the teacher asking. They will work for food, you know, and a piece of gum is huge even at the high school level. If there's a class that can't handle that, student need to place their phones on your desk (You never sit there anyway) or on a table up front, or in a clear, plastic, hanging shoe holder, or in a basket. Whatever. They can get the phones when needed for class activities. This means YOU TOO. Teachers who use their phones in the classroom for calling, texting, or emailing or allow their students to do so are not only teaching their students the cell phone rule is dumb, they are teaching them that their class isn't important, and in the process, the teachers are making it difficult for others to enforce the rules.

Activities

- **Take the Phone on a Vacation:** Geography and science students are studying about other biospheres. After using their text, cha-cha, and Google to learn about the climate of a region, they then dress their phones for the trip to their chosen spot. Recently, her students made khanga's, traditional dress for Tanzania. Students put a Swahili quote and its English equivalent on the Khanga. This also correlates to her biology students' study of Jane Goodall's work in Gombe, Tanzania, and her chemistry students' study about the extraction of gold and natural gas in this region. Mrs. Ricker has also seen parkas, swimsuits, hiking gear, to name a few, in other lessons. This strategy can be used with characters from a story, authors, famous mathematicians, scientists, athletes, types of cells..... Student can then do a brief style show and share their findings.
 - **Google Voice:** Record a question and students call and leave the answer. It allows you to see a transcription of the message and listen to it, too.
 - **Calculators:** Although most schools have them in math class, other classes that don't have them on hand for students can benefit from number crunching. For example, social studies students studying elections can quickly determine percentages of electoral votes or other scenarios. Science classrooms can use them to perform calculations related to fieldwork.
 - **Digital/Video cameras:** Not all schools or classrooms are outfitted with digital cameras, although many can benefit from them. For example, students can use them to document a variety of things for multimedia presentations or reports. Fieldtrips can be documented and incorporated into digital travelogues.¹
OneTrueMedia (internet storage and FABULOUS presentation program)
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Take pictures w/ cell phones for assignments and text the pics to teacher evernote account as an assignment.

Students take pictures w/ cell phones on field trips, email me the pics and they can be uploaded to animoto to turn the field trip into a movie

PhotoBlogger (photo blogging)

Flickr (Image storage and sharing)

Picasa (storage and sharing)

YouTube (storage and sharing)

TeacherTube (storage and sharing)

- **Internet access:** Many phones have wireless Internet access, thus, opening up a world of possibilities for class use. Science students might conduct fieldwork and submit their observations or data to either an internal or external data gathering site. Students can subscribe to podcasts that you produce or offered by a multitude of other sources.² Student can look up virtually anything via their phones. Students can email information to their home or to the teacher.
- **Dictionaries:** Students in literature and language arts classes can benefit from being able to quickly query the definition of a word. Additionally, students who are English learners especially can benefit from translation dictionaries which are becoming available on cell phones.³
- **Cell Phones as Audio Recorders:** Most phones have voice notes or some type of audio recording built in. These can be emailed and uploaded to the web.
mp3 Player: Listening to podcasts; classroom audio projects
SayNow (Podcasting, Messaging, Conferencing)
FreeConferencePro (Phone Conferencing)
Drop.io (Podcasting, text, video, image, and faxing)
GeoGraffiti Voice Marks –podcasts by region
Turn cell phones into recording devices to make quick "podcasts." Have students call teacher googlevoice account, and the teacher can then embed the messages in a webpage, blog.
- **Cell Phones as Classroom Projects and Assessments:**
Zinadoo (Mobile Webpage)
TextForFree (Text Messaging to phones via computer)
PollEverywhere – (Surveys, polls, multiple choice, short answer) great for assessments for learning
Mobiode (Mobile Surveys)
mobilespin.net (Mobile content tools to make ringtones/podcasts)
- **Ecology:** to record bird sounds outside (Students have been playing bird wars to learn bird sounds) and to take pictures of areas they are sketching. This is a great way to double check the "ecomaps" to make sure we not missing major details.
- **Chemistry:** We do "Devil Dollar" bonus questions (usually one a week) where students can access cha-cha or google to find a RANDOM chemistry fact that relates to our area of study. For example, we have been studying radioactivity, and we looked at different ties to the Manhattant Project and ORNL.
- **Science Experiments:** In the "old days" when doing a science experiment kids would take "observation notes" and sketch in order to make modifications. Now they video or take a picture of the experiment and revise from that. Example: Scientific research and balloon

² <http://teachingtoday.glencoe.com/howtoarticles/cell-phones-in-the-classroom>

³ <http://teachingtoday.glencoe.com/howtoarticles/cell-phones-in-the-classroom>

cars...they had two days to design the fastest and longest "Mars Rover". When they video a test, they can replay and see where the problems were in the car to modify everything from wheel ratios to balloon placement. AP Bio can take a pic in the field and come back to the field guides later on also. Etc...etc...Overall in science the students do not consciously do a cell phone activity....they just use it as a tool. For instance, teachers no longer buy stop watches to time experiments. Students just use the stop watch on their phones.

- **Geography/Social Studies:** Pull up maps (even with satellite imagery), Global Positioning Systems: field trips; multiplayer search games.
- **Math:** Mobile math and of course, the calculator on the phone.
- Cell Phones in Math Class - by Ben Rimes
- **English:** The phone is a mini word processor
Have students create a scene from a novel, record it, download it to the computer and share it with the class.
Ebooks – Some students download their novels and read them on their phones.
Send text messages and correct grammar and spelling. Send back.
Select a suitable passage and ask the class to rewrite it in text-speak." Cul, right?
Cha-Cha cheaters- Let students call cha-cha for the answer to one question. 800-224-2242
- **Foreign Language:** Text Google to translate words from one language to another.
Call students in the class, speaking in the language studied. Student check for errors, pronunciation, etc.
- **Twitter:** Subscribe to twitter via your phone to get classroom assignments/bonus assignments/quiz or test reminders, and use Twitter for creative activities and creative class assignments.
- **Tuner and metronome apps:** These are used often in band.
- **Reviews:** Send kids on a scavenger hunt using their phones. You can text them the clues; they can text the answers. They can take pictures of the answers.
- **Study Stacks:** Flashcards that can be synced to phones with study stack
- **Photographic Memory:** take pictures of the notes on the board. There are phone programs that will convert these images to PDF
- **Calculator:** Every phone's got one.
- **Pocket watch:** Use the stopwatch on your phone to time skits or activities. Teachers must have a working clock in the classroom or students will use the "pocket watch" excuse all of the time or getting their phone out.
- **Research and Organization:**
Let students use the phone's calendar to add assignments. "Okay, get out your phone and add these dates."

Notes – students take a photo of the notes from the board.

Homework and Assignment Alerts

Evernote takes your texts, emails, files, and organizes them for you. Research: Students create evernote accounts, while researching they take pictures of book pages, documents...pictures are then organized as images in evernote and can be tagged, organized and used later to write research paper.

Twitter accounts for homework assignments.

Text Messaging Reference Desks

- **Communication:** Allowing students to communicate and or chat during class or outside of class will open up the lines of communication between you and your students. Many of these resources allow for monitored chat rooms, quick webcam communications, and more. The nice

thing is that you can create and open a room during class and then close it outside of class if you are worried about posts outside of class.

Skype- download and install for quick video conf. Purchase a webcam for about \$35. Many computers already have webcams in them. Skype can also be installed free on smartphones. Kids love showing off when doing reports, labs plays, and demonstrations. Files can be shared. Skype also has additional free programs such as an interactive, shared whiteboard. Here are some ideas.

Email or ask questions via GoogleVoice number that students are embarrassed to ask.

dimdim - online synchronized meetings

Vawkr - this is the easiest and quickest video chat room on the web. Go to the site, grab a room and share the link with people. All webcams are recognized and everyone can talk, hear and type whenever they want. Very interactive. Create a private room as well.

Palbe embeddable virtual conf. room free 3 people

VoxOx - free download for all of you online collaborations and communications

Backnoise - back channel chats that you can embed


Tinychat - create a free room, embed into a website, save chats

Babelwithme - create collaborative chats that translate while you type

- **Facebook:** If you could have a facebook page for your class, you could get to it via the app on your phone and basically use it as a blog. You could ask a question and have students respond by commenting or using the discussion feature. You could also upload pictures of your class doing things easily this way. If you create a FAN face book page, people can see it without being a facebook member. What's up at GHS. (Fan page) A GROUP page can be made. You can decide who posts and who is a member.
- **Business/Yearbook:** many things such as, calculators, internet, mini-polls, calling companies and individuals for research, and so on. Lots of good stuff we can do.
"This probably isn't practical for most classes but my yearbook staffers communicate with other students via text messaging. Many students won't bother to fill out a questionnaire so my staffers will text other students during class for quotes; they always get a timely response...some even during the class period but our goal is immediately after school. Sometimes they'll text and ask them to drop by my room for a headshot after school...great response. Some students have even communicated with business owners via texting because that's how they preferred to communicate with my staffers. Last year I had a staffer to brainstorm at home and put her ideas on her phone...I accused her of texting a friend until she showed me her "notes"...I was impressed. Staffers often use their cell phones to take pictures when they don't have their digital cameras on hand. Of course, they use their phones to keep track of deadlines and other yearbook responsibilities."
 - Take quizzes

Articles

- Cell Phones -West Virginia Department of Education
- Cell Phones in the Classroom: A Good Practice Guide by Terry Freedman
- Fun and games with mobile phones: SMS messaging in microeconomics experiments - Stephen L. Cheung
- New Study Recasts Cell Phones as Effective Teaching Tool - by Jennifer Anderson
- Embrace the constructive uses of cell phones in the classroom for learning - Wesley Fryer
- From Toy to Tool: Cell Phone in Schools (Blog) - by Liz Kolb
- Cell phone college class opens in gadget-loving Japan, still a test at Cyber University - Sydney Mobile Herald

-  [Prensky-What Can You Learn From a Cell Phone-FINAL.pdf](#) - Article by Marc Prensky
- [Pens, Paper and ... Cellphones?: Examining How Modern Technology Can Enhance Learning in the Classroom](#)
- [Cell Phones for Learning / iPhones in the Classroom!](#) - Wesley Fryer's Teach Digital wiki
- [Fifty Ideas in Fifty Minutes: Mobile Phones](#)
- Read more: <http://www.teach42.com/2008/05/06/mobile-phones-in-the-classroom-again/#ixzz0h7XsnC3V>
- <http://www.teach42.com/2009/10/06/what-can-you-do-with-a-cell-phone-in-the-classroom/#ixzz0h7Y8dmC2>
- <http://teachingtoday.glencoe.com/howtoarticles/cell-phones-in-the-classroom>

Handout for teachers:

Cell phones as Learning Tools at GHS? You've GOT to be Kidding!

While we recognize that current cell phone usage by our students has become a problem and an issue, I am encouraging you to rethink what we believe about students and cell phones. Cell phones are a powerful technological tool! With most cell phones that our students have at school every day they can:

- Make calls
- Text
- E-mail
- Connect with the internet
- Take pictures
- Make videos

While we all can quickly list many problems with each of these abilities in students hands....just think about the possibilities for learning! And the upside is that it costs us nothing....the students and parents are providing this technology to us for free! 😊

We are going to tighten our policy for cell phone usage outside of the classroom:

Any student who is observed texting, making calls, taking pictures or video or using a cell phone for any purpose without teacher permission and direction between the hours of 7:40 and 2:40 will have the cell phone taken by the teacher and turned into the main office.

The cell phone will be kept by the administration for 7 days, or the student may pay a \$20 cash fine at the end of the day for the return of their phone.

I also strongly encourage all teachers to make it part of your classroom culture (and our school culture) to require students to lay their cell phones on their desks at the beginning of each class, whether you will be using their cell phones during instruction, or not. This will take away their ability to text in their hoodie pockets!

However, I want to **encourage** you to check out the following resources and learn, explore, and use your professional imaginations as to how students using cell phones as technology tools can enhance your teaching and student learning. Then please **share** with your colleagues and me what you are discovering and how you are allowing students to use cell phones in the classroom for learning purposes.

Good luck, and I can't wait to see what you and our students at GHS will do with cell phones as learning tools!

Linda

Internet Sites to Get you Started with Cell phones as Learning Tools:

- www.cellphonesinlearning.com : Home site of Liz Kolb, author of *Toys to Tools: Connecting Student Cell Phones to Education* (available Oct., 2008). Many articles concerning this issue, and many links to free internet sites to facilitate cell phones as learning tools. Best comprehensive site on this subject that I've seen. I highly recommend this site!
- <http://wiffitti.com> : live text messaging site
- www.polleverywhere.com : site developed by MIT that works like classroom performance systems (clickers). This is FREE for groups of 30 or less. Great for quick assessment of student learning and test reviews. The kids will love it!
- www.chacha.com : free site that allows you to call toll free (1-800-2chacha; 1-800-224-2242) and ask any question. They will text you back the answer. Try it!
- www.ireport.com and ireports on CNN.com: Mobile citizen journalism. Great for language arts classes.
- www.go.blogger.com : Free and easy site to set up a blog. The students would love classroom blogs!
- <http://gobcast.com> : Free podcasting - can post audio interviews, pictures, and videos on your classroom blogs
- <http://flickr.com> : Photo blogging
- www.myartspace.com : shared pictures, curriculum for teachers, and fieldtrips reflections from museums from across the world. Advertised as the premier art website of the world!
- <http://blip.tv> : video blogging

- <http://jott.com> : Speech to text blogging. Great for students with disabilities.
- <http://textmarks.com> : Text message alerts. Send messages to your students - homework or test reminders?
- www.takingitglobal.org : International site for shared education across the world.
- www.myhero.org : Biographies of thousands of people across time and cultures.
- www.learn.org : Site developed by two Canadian teachers who have linked their classes and school with other students and schools from across the world for shared learning.
- www.icue.com : NBC news site that offers free video of major news events. Great for making history come alive for students.

Handout for Students and Parents:

CELL PHONE POLICY 2009-2010

1. Students are not permitted to use or have cell phones in sight from the time they arrive at school until 2:40 P.M.
2. Students are allowed to use their cell phone for reasonable communication purposes in or out of the building after 2:40, unless otherwise designated at specific school functions.
3. The taking of photos or the recording of videos, whether by cell phone or any other device, in places where privacy is a reasonable expectation is strictly prohibited. An incident of this nature could result in a sexual harassment violation.
4. Using cell phone cameras to record altercations on school grounds or at school events is prohibited. In such cases, phones may be confiscated as evidence.
5. Students are allowed to use the cell phones in the classrooms for educational purposes only and must be under the direct supervision of their teacher.
6. Under teacher direction, cell phones are to be placed on student desks in the —offll or —quietll mode at the beginning of each class period.

Consequences for Cell Phone Policy Violations

1. Violation of the above policy will result in the student's cell phone being confiscated for seven days.
2. Students may choose to have their cell phone returned before the end of the seven days by paying a twenty dollar (cash only) fine at the end of the school day in the main office.
3. An administrator will be contacted if the student refuses to give up the phone for a violation, or if a student turns in a —dummyll phone. The student's insubordination will result in a level 2 offense.

